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KING STEPHEN,
OF HUNGARY.

KING STEPHEN,

OF HUNGARY ;

A D R A M A,

In Five Acts.

BY

A SCENE-SHIFTER.

LONDON: T. C. NEWBY,
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PREFACE.

THE following pages were written under circumstances which precluded all access to any of the great historical works on Hungary; a fact which the Author trusts he may be allowed to advance in extenuation of such errors and faults as criticism may discover, and which, if not admitted, still remains a fact.

It will scarcely be necessary to remark that most of the characters are merely myths. This may be considered a great liberty to take with history; but the Author, not possessing the ability of Shakspeare to reproduce defunct heroes, statesmen, and beauties, was obliged to surround his real personages with fictitious auxiliaries. Without such help it is more than probable that his task would never have been brought to a conclusion, and the world would have remained ignorant of the genius he is about to reveal.

Not having any literary friend to whom the MS. could be submitted for perusal, and being rather confused in his reminiscences of a very desultory course of reading, the Author is afraid he may now and then have pilfered and served up anew sundry thoughts and words belonging to

other people. In this dilemma, he pleads guilty in advance, and hopes that his apology, being made beforehand, will have the greater weight.

Finally, the Author being of a very modest and nervous temperament, respectfully deprecates all unnecessary censure at the hands of that eminent body of citizens, the critics. Not being at feud with them, for the simple reason that they are not aware of his existence, he trusts they will graciously bear in mind his peculiar psychical tendencies. Strong-minded individuals who may disregard this hint, are hereby warned that the Author has made his will, with express injunctions that all persons who may be concerned in bringing him, like the lamented Keats, to an untimely grave, shall be prosecuted for manslaughter, or assault with intent to kill. On the contrary, should he survive, all those who manifest a disposition to foster rising merit, will be duly extolled in any future productions of his pen.

*Thalia Cottage, Melpomene Road,
December, 1858.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

STEPHEN *King of Hungary.*

EMERIC *His Son, in love, under the name of Geyza,
with Geraldine.*

VAZUL *Cousin to King Stephen.*

ANDREAS }
BELA } *Sons of King Stephen's Cousin.*

ERNEST *A Courtier in league with Bertha against
King Stephen.*

COUNT ESTERHAZY.

COUNT BATTHYANY.

ELISHA }
AARON } *Two Jews.*

GERVAIS *A Monk.*

ZADIG *A Magician.*

THE PRIMATE; A LEGATE FROM POPE JOHN; OFFICERS,
GUARDS, PAGES, PRIESTS, &c.

WOMEN.

PRINCESS BERTHA... *A relative of Kupan, the head of the old
Magyar party.*

GERALDINE *Her Daughter.*

ILDEGONDE *Tutress to Geraldine.*

GERTRUDE *A Bohemian Girl.*

*The Scenes are principally laid at Gran. Time, early part of the
Eleventh Centurg.*

George Becker
KING STEPHEN,

OF HUNGARY;

A D R A M A,

IN FIVE ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

COURT-YARD OF THE ROYAL PALACE AT GRAN, BENEATH PRINCE
EMERIC'S WINDOW. ENTER FOUR FORESTERS.

First Forester Sings.

1

AWAY to the glades where the red-deer are lying
On the sweet-scented bracken beneath the green boughs,
Whither huntsman and dun-hound are merrily hieing,
The fleet-footed stag from his slumbers to rouse.

CHORUS.

Then haste thee, sir knight, leave the dame in her bower ;
Leave books to the schoolman and toil to the slave ;
And away to the chase ere fleets the brief hour,
Its wild joys to share and its dangers to brave.

B

2

Amidst the green sprays the lithe squirrel is bounding,
And the soft breeze the lark's carol through ether doth bear;
Around the dense covert the glad horn is sounding,
And the hawthorn's sweet blossom perfumes the cool air.

CHORUS,—Then haste thee, sir knight, &c.

3

The blithe birds the first joys of summer are tasting,
And their melody cheers e'en the deep woodland gloom.
While o'er the brown heather the wild bee is hasting,
To the bank where the primrose and violet bloom.

CHORUS,—Then haste thee, sir knight, &c.

ENTER PRINCE EMERIC.

P. EMERIC.—Thanks, friends, for your music; 'tis well chosen, but I pray you to hold me excused if I go not forth to the chase to-day.

FIRST FORESTER.—Pardon a servant's intrusion, sir; but is your highness ill at ease in mind or body?

P. EMERIC.—Not so well as I might be in either, and yet not so ill as to need my physician; but it must suffice thee that I care not for the chase to day.

FIRST FORESTER.—Then your highness will miss good sport. 'Tis a sweet dewy morning, and the scent will lie right well. Our youths have found the slot of a fine old buck, and marked where he hath fretted the oak.

SECOND FORESTER.—Or would it please you better, sir, that we took the falcons? We shall of a surety soon find a crane or a heron, and Starolta would stoop bravely to-day; she hath been well bathed and oiled, and hath had saffron.

P. EMERIC.—Nay, friend, I know thy care, and doubt not

that thy pet never was in better condition ; but thou must fly her alone to-day while I play the sluggard.

FIRST FORESTER.—Your royal sire, prince, ever loved the chase, and at your years would have left the brightest eyes and the best book for a run after the hart. He always said that, next to war, 'twas the best school for making soldiers ; and that he who would be lithe of body, clear of head, and strong i' the arm, should learn the trade while he was young.

P. EMERIC.—Aye, Hubert, but thou knowest my father, like my grandsire, Geyza, was ever more of a soldier than I am. But take comfort ; another day I promise to hunt with thee as long as horse and hound will hold out.

FIRST FORESTER.—Nay, your highness, 'tis not for a serving man to parry and thrust at words with his master's son. Farewell, sir (*kneels and kisses Prince Emeric's hand*). Come, men, let's forth while the dew lies (*the foresters kneel and exeunt*).

P. EMERIC.—(*Solus*) 'Twas well ye went, or ye might have noted more than I liked. He that loves, must be alone, or herd only with some fool cursed like himself. Cursed, did I say, as if the worst word man's wit ever forged were fit to image pangs which even lost souls are spared. Oh, love ! thou direst plague ! Poets should have drawn thee with two faces, and one should have been the likeness of the prince of mischief ; but I will know the end of these torments, whatever come of it (*Exit*).

SCENE II.

A ROOM IN THE ROYAL PALACE AT GRAN. ENTER KING STEPHEN, PRECEDED BY GUARDS, AND COUNT BATTHYANY FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

K. STEPHEN.—Welcome, brave Batthyany, what answer from the Croat to our request?

C. BATTHYANY.—Your excellency, King Cresimir sent a soldier's answer.

K. STEPHEN.—He will not give up the land?

C. BATTHYANY.—He will not.

K. STEPHEN.—He gave no reason for refusing?

C. BATTHYANY.—None, sire, save that it was his purpose, To keep by force what he had gained by—

K. STEPHEN.— Fraud.

'Twas right well spoken by the surly Croat ;

A bull, a bear, a mastiff,

Would use like terms, did he possess the knack

To vent his sulkiness in human words.

Such is the Croat, find him where,

And call him what name he liketh best.

A rude and treacherous friend, a churlish host ;

Readier with a coarse gibe than a kind word.

I trust he spoke thee fair, sir Count?

C. BATTHYANY.—Why, truly, sire, the king was somewhat rougher

Than breeding warranted ; but then I deemed it only

The honest bluntness of a hard-pressed soldier.

K. STEPHEN.—Fie on the thought, Count. A soldier Is not a ruffian.

He is but half a knight who acts the bully.

The snarling cur that mangles each weaker rival

Is not more brave than is the gentle hound.
Well, we must tame this brute with steel and brand,
In lack of gentler physic.

C. BATTHYANY.—Your excellency, then, is resolute
To bring this question to a mortal issue,
Even though the eastern frontier now is menaced.

K. STEPHEN.—Yes, Count;
Rather will honour yield up life and crown,
Than wear a crown dishonoured by that life.
But say, sir, how did the Croat army look?

C. BATTHYANY.—To tell the truth, sire, like a motley pack,
As dirty as the ground they lie upon.
Unkempt, half-starved, with rudely-fashioned weapons,
And quaint strange dresses, all of rags and tawdry:
A sullen, clamorous herd; but chained to the yoke,
By a discipline that takes no more account of blood,
Than of the silent ground it falls upon.

K. STEPHEN.—Then let me tell thee, these are the men to fear;
For they have neither plans, nor hopes, nor cares.
A life scarce worth the having or the taking
Is cheaply set against a lucky raid.
Thou'lt see,
They'll flock like starving vultures to the field.

C. BATTHYANY.—Your excellency, these loose vagrants are
not soldiers,
They'll vanish as surely as the mist doth,
Which may defy, but yields before the sun.

K. STEPHEN.—Then be that sun, sweet count; melt them
to dew;
Take with thee heat enough in shape of troops,
But be a prudent husbandman; beware
Ye thaw not snow to a devouring flood;
Farewell, sir. My best hopes follow you.

C. BATTHYANY.—Adieu, sire (*Kneels, kisses his hand, and leaves*).

K. STEPHEN.—(*Alone*).

Unless I am most strangely cheated, thou wilt find
The Croat fears not danger, toil, or war ;
But I will give thee both fair play and favour.
Titles and wealth await thee if successful ;
Shame and disaster if thou playest the braggart ;
Which Heaven avert ;
And rather give to thee a soldier's grave,
Or all the honours that befit the brave. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III.

A ROOM IN PRINCESS BERTHA'S CASTLE AT GRAN. GERALDINE
ALONE, EMBROIDERING.

Enter a Female Servant.

SERVANT.—Lady, her highness is coming to confer with you on urgent matters.

GERALDINE.—So be it, wench, Doth my mother think I am an officer of state that she needs ask leave to speak to me?

Enter Princess Bertha.

P. BERTHA.—Geraldine, I have much to say to thee. Maiden, leave us. (*The girl leaves the room. Geraldine lays down her embroidery, and seats herself beside her mother.*)

GERALDINE.—What is your wish, mother?

P. BERTHA.—Thou knowest how long the feud hath been laid between the Christians and the old Maygars, ever since our brave cousin, Kupan, fell before Duke Stephen in

the bloody fight at Wesprim—thou hast heard me say how thy father on his death-bed bequeathed to thee a heritage of strife. Thou knowest this?

GERALDINE.—Truly, mother, I ought to know it. (*Aside*, Now comes the story of the old fool who rode in armour to the Theiss, and wanted to be buried alive for the sake of dead gods.)

BERTHA.—I have sought to hoard up wealth, that we might one day lord it over these proud, wasteful Christian peers.

GERALDINE.—Aye, mother, that I have not only known but felt. My childhood hath been a stern schooling against the weakness of the flesh, and art hath triumphed over nature.

BERTHA.—Rebuke me not, Geraldine; the hour which sets that straight is nigh. Andreas, son of the king's cousin, seeks the promise of thy hand, though he dare not as yet avow his purpose. But thou seemest little pleased at the thought of wedding this young chief.

GERALDINE.—As little as with wedding his uncle himself.

BERTHA.—Art thou possessed? Wilt thou always be trumpeting about the silly notion that thou canst love nothing in the shape of a man?

GERALDINE.—Truly, madam, I never cared much for the animal, nor hath my training made me like him any the better. Whenever I hear a great, broad-shouldered lout talking of pangs and madness, I marvel why he suffers such torture when there's the Danube nigh at hand, deep and wide enough to soothe the sorrows of all the lovers that ever went crazed.

BERTHA.—Nay, if thou hast not a grain of love, thou hast thy full share of wit. Let there be a second duel and raid for thy hand, and Duke Stephen will make thee give it to whom he thinks fit.

GERALDINE.—So please you, mother, 'tis not my fault if

these gentlemen should cut each other's throats, and burn each other in their castles, as boys burn a wasp's nest. Methinks the king rather owes me thanks for letting out a little hot blood in this way, and keeping these young brigands from robbing travellers, and doing mischief to honest men.

BERTHA.—'Tis not a time to jest, Geraldine, nor a matter to jest about. If thou canst not love, try to learn the manner ; remember, I will not brook too much of thy froward humour. Farewell for a few hours, I have much to do.

GERALDINE.—Madam, I kiss your hand (*Exit*).

BERTHA.—(*Alone.*)

But that I bore thee in these arms I'd say,
Thy natal star rose in the sullen north ;
For thou art colder than the warlike maids,
Who dwell in their starved lands beneath the rule
Of mighty Odin : but I will teach thee
To demean thyself after another fashion.
I cannot suffer that this wayward temper,
For some wild freak should mar the toil of years.

Exit.

SCENE IV.

A CHAMBER IN THE ROYAL PALACE AT GRAN. PRINCE EMERIC
ALONE, WITH A BOOK IN HIS HAND.

P. EMERIC.—Farewell, ye dreams of beauty, wit, and valour,
I own the bard no longer for a master ;
The god of love hath ta'en the lists against ye,
And with his tiny lance cast from the saddle
The giant form of ancient chivalry.
Men say true love and learning mate not well ;

Then take thy love sweet learning.

(Throws the book away.)

For I am love's weak captive.

Enter King Stephen.

K. STEPHEN.—Good morrow, my son, *(kissing him.)*

P. EMERIC.—*(kneels and kisses K. Stephen's hand.)*

My service to you, father.

K. STEPHEN.—Thy cheek is pale, my boy ; thou'rt but a lad,
And yet thou'rt losing fast the joyous step,
The rounded limb, the cheery voice, the bloom
Of boyhood.

Thou hast had too much of these old books and vigils ;
And let me tell thee,—

He that would love his books must sometimes leave them
For horse and hound, or ball or feast,
As epicures by fasting whet their appetites.

P. EMERIC.—My father, if thou hadst tasted of the weird joys
That witch the student's spirit—hadst felt their mighty
fetters,

Which do constrain men more than thirst for gold and lands,
Thou wouldst not marvel that I can forego
For them the blithe chase or the tourney's strife.

K. STEPHEN.—My son, forget not that thou art a prince,
And not a poet. Thy study should be policy, and war,
and history ;

Thou hast to learn how to act as well as reason,
No book-taught king could curb the haughty Maygars,
And though thou think'st it not

Yet there is as much that trains the soul to good
In noble acts as all that books e'er taught.

What were these poets did not warrior, king, and sage,
Leave them a tale to tell ?

P. EMERIC.—My father, what were warrior, sage, or king,

Without the bard had told their tale ?

K. STEPHEN.—He that is truly good and noble need not reckon

What men say of him. He hath done that

Which God appointed every man to do.

But thou'rt a tender colt, and I'll not curb thee hard.

Now tell me, Emeric, dost thou still love this maiden ;

This daughter of the tameless race of Simegh ?

P. EMERIC.—Yea, father, more than books, or life, or crown

K. STEPHEN —(*Aside*, The eagle should devour, not love the
viper.)

Then, Emeric, if thou canst win her love,

Her tears shall drown the last spark of hate

Between her house and thine. This palace is her home ;

Or if she like it better, Alba Regalis

Shall rise in fairy beauty for her sake.

P. EMERIC.—Your blessing, sir, and thanks for more

Than any son could ask a father (*Kneels*).

K. STEPHEN.—Bless thee, my son (*Exit Prince Emeric*).

Alas ! I fear blessings will serve but little

To guard thy youthful frame from strong-armed fate—

For there is more in this than mere love-sickness—

Thy pinched cheek hath on it the cast of death.

At times thy step is like an aged man's,

And thou art tired ere day hath well begun,

And restless when mankind would seek their rest.

Should heaven decree the worst, oh, may it spare

At least my Gisela this woe to share !

Exit.

SCENE V.

A ROOM IN PRINCESS BERTHA'S CASTLE AT GRAN.

GERALDINE AND ILDEGONDE.

ILDEGONDE.—So, lady Geraldine, you are to wed with the noble Andreas, and you love him, without a doubt.

GERALDINE.—I shall love him, dame, much as I do my pretty dog, Kalman, or my ger-falcon, Genseric, who hath such a beautiful dark eye and brown plume.

ILDEGONDE.—But what have you to say against him lady ; Is he not a brave and likely knight ?

GERALDINE.—Yes, likely to go to sleep. He is well-nigh worse than my modest spark who comes a wooing me at night, and looks as if he would die for want of mischief to keep his blood moving. A sweet-tempered youth, whose gall is turned to milk, and his fat to oil : a young sage with a visage as sad as the barbel we kept in the pond, who looked so like a rejected lover.

ILDEGONDE.—Nay, lady, you do wrong to flout the youth. He is trimly dressed, and bears him like one of good blood.

GERALDINE.—Good, madam ; his cloak is not so worn as that of a serving-man, nor his doublet so stained and greasy as a scholar's ; neither doth he use much oil on his head, and look bilious and forlorn, as a true poet should ; nor swear, brag, and lie, like a soldier.

ILDEGONDE.—Why, truly, 'tis better you should not love him ; for your mother would never suffer you to wed less than a noble, and the young Geysa hath the honesty to say he is of a poor house.

GERALDINE.—Dost thou love me, Ildegonde ? for if thou dost, bribe thy swain with a vow to put them both in a boat

without an oar, and let them float as far as the Danube will bear them.

ILDEGONDE.—Why, lady, surely you are not so little of a woman as to hate all lovers ?

GERALDINE.—Say just enough of woman to hate them all. I always marvel that a smooth-skinned, sweet-scented creature like woman, should suffer one of these ill-flavoured males to come nigh her. Why the first scent of his jerkin were enough to poison one.

ILDEGONDE.—(*Aside*, Now will I see what thy mother's prompting is worth). But would'st thou have me think that thou lovest not the pomp and state of wedded life as other women do ? Is there a daughter of earth that doth not fear neglect more than death ?

GERALDINE.—Why, yes, 'tis a great matter to see a scholar grown clean, and a bear turn spaniel, that one may give him a rose-bud to kiss, dear brute ; nay, 'tis something, even, to lead captive a sweet, pensive creature who fears to come too nigh me, and wanders to and fro, as though he were a child of that Cain the Christians talk of.

ILDEGONDE.—Lady Geraldine, you speak as though making love were the beginning and ending of the riddle.

GERALDINE.—There you are wrong, madam. I have thought how sweet it must be to play chief lady in a crazy old dungeon on a hill-top—to lie on the state-bed, in the same musty chamber where all the good folks died before me—to rule over unkempt, greasy-jerkined serving-men, and to queen it over pert maids and stupid knaves.

ILDEGONDE.—Lady, you are past bearing. You will have to wed the knight ; so I pray you play not the fool when he comes to-morrow.

GERALDINE.—As if there were a he who could not play the fool for two !

ILDEGONDE.—Forget not, lady, that thy mother deals with those who can as easily change thee to a were-wolf, as thou canst change thy robe.

GERALDINE.—Nay, madam, if you will needs moralize, let us go and dine first.

Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

A STREET IN GRAN. ENTER ANDREAS AND BELA FROM
OPPOSITE SIDES.

ANDREAS.—Good morrow, brother, how fare you?

BELA.—Right well, Andreas, and what news?

ANDREAS.—Nought more than that I am now accepted suitor for the hand of Geraldine.

BERA.—(*Aside*, And thou wilt have to get the maiden's good word as the lion wins his mate's; by dint of his claws and teeth). And the lady herself?

ANDREAS.—She saith nothing, but her mother will let Geraldine cross her as much as a cat lets her kitten tear her sleek fur; so much as she liketh and no more. But how prospers our affair?

BELA.—Not too well; but the seed is sown, and Ernest will join us. Vazul will not, and seems proof against every bait, so we must make him minister to his own perdition. I thought to bring him to-night.

ANDREAS.—Art thou mad? How long dost thou think he would be in the house ere Geraldine clawed his face, and her mother wished him with Thor and Odin?

BELA.—Marry, and little he'd care to pay them a visit in his wild humours.

ANDREAS.—Doth he love the wine-cup and a fair face as much as ever?

BELA.—More than ever. As I live, I believe that were the two deities thou didst speak of, to ask him to supper he'd snap at the chance, were he to have the choosing of the dishes.

ANDREAS.—And that will please Stephen none too much. But now I go to further matters with Ernest, so come with me and we'll speak more of our affairs.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

THE GARDEN OF PRINCESS BERTHA'S CASTLE, NEAR THE WINDOW
OF GERALDINE'S APARTMENT. ENTER PRINCE EMERIC : VAZUL
IN THE BACKGROUND.

P. EMERIC.—See how the queen of night in silence weighs
Her golden anchor, and by the pale horizon's light,
Her orb'd silver sail slowly unfurls,
To steer her bark o'er the wide seas of ether,
While in her wake the starry fleet doth gather.
Here, hid from the rude world, let me evoke
The soul of poesy, and my love's beauty sing.

Sings.

1.

There's a light that's more glad than the sun's joyous beam,
Or the smile of the moon on the rippling stream ;
Or the pale evening star rising silent and lone,
'Tis the light in that bosom where love rears his throne.

Geraldine !

2.

There's a hue that's more fair than the blush of the rose,
And more pure than the lily or winter's pale snows :
And more priceless than jewels from India's parched shore ;
'Tis the bloom on the cheek of the girl we adore.

Geraldine !

'Tis sweet when the nightingale tunes her glad throat,
And sweet is the magic of music's soft note ;
And sweet is the call of the lone woodland dove ;
But more sweet is the voice of the girl that we love.

Geraldine !

(Geraldine appears at the window.)

GERALDINE.—Good youth, wast thou ever crossed in love that thou singest such plaintive ditties? Thy song might have been longer and livelier, fair Geyza.

P. EMERIC.—Lady Geraldine, I know that thou art as witty as thou art lovely, and that thy wild spirit hath no malice in it; but I pray you for one moment forego what is foreign to your humour.

VAZUL.—(*Aside*, That's about as true, cousin, as if I had said thou hast more judgment than love.)

GERALDINE.—'Twould be more foreign to my humour to let a goodly youth go prowling about at night when honest people should be saying their prayers. Why, as I live, thou art unbonneted.

P. EMERIC.—Sweet Geraldine, wilt thou always turn aside from my suit?

GERALDINE.—Nay, not when thou hast ceased to proffer it, and that thou should'st do; 'tis a losing game to woo a maid who wants no men to plague her life out.

P. EMERIC.—Lady Geraldine, ask me not to relinquish all hope.

GERALDINE.—If I did 'twould serve me little; men give up few things they like to keep.

P. EMERIC.—But say, what ground hast thou against my proffered love?

GERALDINE.—Ground enough to stand firm on. Mercy

on me, sir Geyza, art thou making love to a doctor of philosophy?

P. EMERIC.—Nay, Lady Geraldine, be not unjust.

GERALDINE.—Ungrateful youth, I was not only just but kind. And now I am about to sing you a song I treat all my lovers to, and as your liege lady, till you find another, I command you to listen; then if the fire of love burns too fiercely in your bosom, why a dip in the river will put it out and dispose you to sleep.

Sings.

1.

'Tis vain to tempt, the gilded bait,
 Hath ne'er a charm for me;
 Nor titles, wealth, nor pomp or state,
 I prize like being free.
 The rose that charmed while on the bough,
 When plucked is prized no more;
 And she that's duped by lover's vow,
 Finds only woes in store.

2.

The maid is free, the wife's a slave;
 Love passes like a dream;
 Or sweet wild flower, rude winds have cast
 Upon the glittering stream.
 Then ladies all, if o'er these elves,
 Your lawful sway ye'd keep;
 Take all their gifts, but shun themselves,
 And leave the knaves to weep.

And now, sir cavalier, good night for the last time, as I am about to be married to another. (*Closes the lattice.*)

P. EMERIC (*sitting down and covering his face with his hands*). Ah, Geraldine, little dost thou think how heavy such light words may lie. And is it to hear my doom in such a tone

that I have foregone the hand of more than one courtly maiden? But thou hast sent home the shaft now. (*Looking up, as Vazul comes forward.*) Ah, Vazul, happy man that thou art.

VAZUL.—Cousin, your lady love speaks plain; a dip in the Danube to-night. Why, a man that would try it had need swim like a fish and bear freezing by nature. Sleep, indeed, marry, yes, and like a dormouse.

P. EMERIC.—Thou hast never been in love, Vazul?

VAZUL.—There prince, Geyza I mean, you are wrong. I am always in love and out of luck with my loves. One lady says she won't have me, for that I love horse and hound better than to hear her sweet tongue, which is not true. Another says I fancy dicing and drinking, and she won't have a word to say to a sot and a gambler. A third falsely maligneth me, and saith I lie abed in the mornings, which I never do but when I sit up late at nights.

P. EMERIC.—(*Sighing*) Ah, Vazul!

VAZUL.—Nay, I pray you, cousin, bear ill fortune better. Come, let's make for the tavern, and try what cheer good wine will yield. If thy love will stand a siege of tokay 'tis well fortified.

P. EMERIC.—I go with thee, but not to the tavern; and do thou not tarry late for I would see thee early.

VAZUL.—I will not, cousin, for I love thee better than the best cellar in Hungary, and that's something to say.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A ROOM IN KING STEPHEN'S PALACE.

K. STEPHEN (*Solus*).—

Thus, then, my hopes of rest are foil'd. The mailed hand
of war

Dashes the cup of peace from my dried lips.

The peasant dreams of war,

And the proud chieftain on his bed of state

Plunges into new scenes of murderous strife.

I never thought to take the lists again,

But if heaven will it so, I can but yield.

Enter Count Esterhazy and Count Ernest.

Good morrow, noble 'Esterhazy; good morrow, Ernest,
what news?

C. ERNEST.—Sire, I would I brought no news at all.

K. STEPHEN.—Then thou bringest bad news; but speak
out, I pray, 'twill not grow, like good wine, better for
keeping.

C. ERNEST.—First, then, sire, your son is gone to the war
in Croatia, and soon after sunrise hath privily left the city.
He sent me these letters for you and your lady (*giving him letters*)
possibly fearing you might not give consent.

K. STEPHEN.—My son gone to join Batthyany? What
drove him to so rash a step? (*Aside, Can it be that his suit
hath not prospered?*)

C. ERNEST.—Your excellency, I know not; for ill news
came so fast that I had little time to question those who
brought word, since next I have to tell that Transylvania hath

joined Bulgaria, and will have a throw at the dice for the crown of Hungary.

C. ESTERHAZY,—'Tis only too true, sire, they are burning and ravaging like so many devils.

K. STEPHEN.—Then we will meet them as men should meet devils. They shall have what they seek for. Thou, Esterhazy, shalt at once summon the states, and I myself will once more lead the army.

C. ERNEST.—Bethink you, sire, how our country needeth rest. All around us heaves like a troubled sea, and should aught befall her monarch, Hungary would again bleed at every wound.

K. STEPHEN.—Count, he that fears for one hour to risk all he hath ever gained, even at the last hour, is no monarch, though he sit upon a throne of gold. If Hungary hath no more than one king among her sons, 'twill not be long ere she fares ill.

C. ESTERHAZY.—Yea, sire; but Hungary wanteth laws well nigh as much as she needeth a king. War brings woe to the toiling serf, and have you not sworn to sheathe your sword and free the slave?

K. STEPHEN.—Aye, that I have, and that I mean to do.

C. ERNEST.—Then think, sire, how they groan beneath the oppression of the nobles, who shoot, hang, or flog them as suits their mood. They are driven forth like beggars, or sold into new slavery as men sell an ox or a horse.

K. STEPHEN.—There is much in what thou sayest, but till blood hath ceased to flow liberty and justice can never thrive. Right flourisheth only under the fostering hand of peace. I will throw for the highest stake, and while I handle the dice, the queen, yourselves, Illezhazy, and other trusty friends, will fill our place.

C. ESTERHAZY.—And Bosnia, sire?

K. STEPHEN.—If Bosnia draw not back, I leave her to thy care. Let thy march be silent, count, but swift as the wind. Strike not till the foe is in the toils, and then let the blow fall as the bolt follows the lightning.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A ROOM IN PRINCESS BERTHA'S CASTLE.

P. BERTHA (*Alone*)

Wilt thou still tempt me on ; shall this dream of a crown
For ever flit before my straining eye-balls ?
Still must I see, Stephen, resting from toil
In the arms of death, and by him that meek idiot,
For whose poor love he spurned my virgin hand ?
Or doth my o'er-tasked brain delude my reason ?

Enter Ildegonde.

ILDEGONDE.—Lady, are you not well, you look but sadly ?

P. BERTHA.—Peace, wench ; what matters the outer shell,
so long as the mind is strong and free ? Prithee mind thy
own looks and not mine.

ILDEGONDE.—I crave pardon, madam. I only thought it
was my humble duty to ask if ought ailed you.

P. BERTHA.—Tell me, Ildegonde, art thou ambitious ?

ILDEGONDE.—I know not that I am, lady, unless the wish
to be a good wife, to possess enow to live honestly with, and to
be thought pious and have middling good looks, be ambition.

P. BERTHA.—Then art thou smitten like thy betters ; and

thy maid would marry a serving man and be queen over the scullion. If cruel, selfish ambition spare not the lowly, how can the high-born hope to 'scape his power? Leave me, dame.

(Exit Ildegonde.)

The vision comes again ; the impalpable crown

Sinks down anew upon this aching brow.

This must not last, or the strained mind will yield

And fall to ruin. Sweet rest, be thou my physic for this fancy.

(Enter Count Ernest.)

Hah, Ernest, I did not think to see thou^{a.s.} so soon again. What means this early visit?

C. ERNEST.—That I fear Stephen will take the field instead of sending only his army away. So thy decoy will pipe in vain ; he is not to be caught without his men-at-arms. Our friends on the frontier will be only too glad to sheathe their swords, when they know he hath drawn his. I hoped to have parted the waters, and overcome each separately.

P. BERTHA.—Then if thou cans't not get Stephen to dismiss his army and stay here to try his strength singly against his old friends, the shaft is lost. Well, we shall find another, and aim it better. But I pray you for to-day hold me excused if I leave you ; I am not well.

C. ERNEST.—I grieve more at the cause than at your leaving. I trust you will rest till you are better, and till that happy hour, adieu. *(Kissing her hand.)*

P. BERTHA.—Adieu, Count.

(Exeunt separately.)

SCENE IV.

COUNT BATTHYANY'S HEAD-QUARTERS NEAR AGRAM, IN CROATIA.

A SOLDIER, ARMED WITH A CROSS-BOW, ON GUARD BEFORE
THE COUNT'S TENT.

SOLDIER.—Thanks for every blessing, morning's here at last. A walk at dawn till a man's so weary he could sleep standing isn't the best post one could wish, but 'tis better than to lie in that smoking hive of a tent. My friends, too, are of a stronger flavour than I like; there's one, Richard, smells like a pole-cat; on the word of a gentleman, I don't believe he hath been cleansed since his mother washed him; a dirty pig he is; given to garlic and possessed of rotten teeth.

Enter Vazul.

Hold; who goes there?

VAZUL.—Thou should'st say, who comes hither? Thy schoolmaster neglected thy grammar, knave.

SOLDIER.—Sir, I know as little of grammar as you like, but I know what my life's worth if I let you pass without the word. Who are you?

VAZUL.—A friend.

SOLDIER.—Then a friend who comes without the password had better show his back, or he may chance to meet an enemy, So move on, sir friend, (*taking aim*) 'ere I let the rising sun shine through thee.

VAZUL.—Dost thou think I am deaf of both ears that thou shoutest so? If thou can'st not let me through, send some one to Count Batthyany with this letter; I want to see him.

SOLDIER.—And have my back skinned for leaving my

post. Withdraw outside the lines, or you'll never see Count Batthyany till you meet him in the next world. Will you go?

VAZUL.—Yes, rude beast. (*Exit.*)

SOLDIER.—Beast, indeed. 'Tis well for thee thou hast met a gentleman, and still better that King Stephen had a father before him. Had he not been born to teach his army better manners, thou hadst had thy brains knocked out and thy pouch emptied. But the good old days are gone, and the provost shrives a man at the first tree, who's unlucky enough to light upon a noisy villain that wants killing ere he part with his ducats.

Enter another Soldier.

SECOND SOLDIER.—Hast thou heard the news?

FIRST SOLDIER.—Dost thou think any one with brains in his head would come out here at the risk of being shot to tell me news? What hast thou to say?

SECOND SOLDIER.—That there will be no war, and that we are going home again. King Cresimir hath wedded his daughter to the prince, and we wait hourly for the young pair.

FIRST SOLDIER.—What sort of lady is she?

SECOND SOLDIER.—As fair a dame as ever made a man leave his supper to sing love ditties under her window.

Enter a Third Soldier.

THIRD SOLDIER.—Ah, my friend, I have news for thee. The youth thou didst refuse to let through is the king's cousin, and hath sent thee a brace of crowns for thy good discipline, with leave from the Count to quit thy post and drink them away.

FIRST SOLDIER.—Come, then, lads, we'll soon melt them into good wine.

Exeunt.

SCENE V.

SAME PLACE. ENTER PRINCE EMERIC, VAZUL, AND COUNT
BATTHYANY.

P. EMERIC.—Yes, Vazul, thou wast right. 'Twas a sharp tussle with my love for Geraldine, but I threw my tyrant; and 'twas no slight help to tell me that she knew how to love the prince but not the scholar.

C. BATTHYANY.—Prince, you might have fared worse than to change the black eyes and ruddy lips of Geraldine for the fair Croat princess. But say, in what sort of humour was the king when he gave you his daughter?

P. EMERIC.—In truth, Count, he bestowed his gift with as much grace as the foul fiend gives a blessing with; and then went back to his kennel like an old mastiff that hath found a better dog than himself.

VAZUL.—'Twas a good miss, cousin. The blood of Geyza and Simegh could no more mix than oil and water.

P. EMERIC.—Right, cousin; the sun cannot shine when the thunder reigneth. But now let us hasten back to Gran, for I want to show my bride. And thou, Count, fortune seems to have favoured thy arms again.

C. BATTHYANY.—Aye, prince, fortune is a pert wench, who flouts a gentle swain, but refuses nought to a bold gallant who won't hear nay. Thy father trusted her little, sir; ere he ruled each chief ordered and none obeyed, 'twas who should brag loudest. But now tis short shrift for those who mind not what they are told.

P. EMERIC.—And how did the nobles like thy terms?

C. BATTHYANY.—Not in the least; but I made some few serve as soldiers, and gave their lands to better men.

P. EMERIC.—And did they not rebel?

C. BATTHYANY.—Indeed they did; however, I told them there were trees enough in Hungary to hang all the worst of them, and the rest thought that, thick as their heads were, they could break them by running against a stone wall.

VAZUL.—Well done, Count. If you doctor thus, I would rather be the leech than the patient. And now let us start, for 'tis a long ride to Gran.

Exeunt Omnes.

SCENE VI.

A ROOM IN THE PALACE AT GRAN.—COUNT ESTERHAZY AND
LEGATE.

LEGATE.—So, Count, you say I cannot see the king?

C. ESTERHAZY.—The king is but now returned from the frontier, where he hath paid some old scores, and 'ere he rested, he gave measures for holding a diet of the nobles to-morrow, when he will thank them for their loyalty in putting down revolt, and celebrate his son's marriage.

LEGATE.—Noble Esterhazy, my message brooks not the idle delays of court forms. His holiness, Pope John, the vicegerent of heaven on earth, before whose throne the haughtiest monarchs must bow, and who treadeth on crowns as perishable trifles, is represented in the frail mortal who seeks audience of thy master.

C. ESTERHAZY.—And were Pope John to come, and all the college of cardinals at his skirts, Stephen would not unmake his measures. Therefore, if you would prosper in your errand, tell it to me.

LEGATE.—At thy own risk be it, Count; for know that the Church, which in her infallible wisdom thought fit to receive Hungary into her fold, and whose crown thy master weareth, doth tender you continuance of his gracious favour, and wisheth Stephen to remove for aye all servants of the true church from the rule of laymen, and leave her to govern her children.

C. ESTERHAZY.—And thy master thinketh Stephen will do this?

LEGATE.—Therefore am I come; and this diet, of which all men will hear, were a fitting occasion.

C. ESTERHAZY.—Then let me tell you, legate, that if you would not walk back like St. Denis, with your head in your hand, you had better leave your mission undone. Wot you not how St. Gerard fared, when our rough knights sent him flying from the Blocksberg like a shooting star?

LEGATE.—Proud soldier, pause 'ere thou enter into strife with a power which, tho' unarmed, can arm against King Stephen the monarchies of earth.

C. ESTERHAZY.—Good father, prate not of ban or interdict to soldiers. So long as we are masters of our neighbours we shall care little for those who are far off. And now, I pray you, sir, think of something better to say, and for to-night accept the best cheer a Magyar host can set before you.

LEGATE.—I accept your courtesy, Count, and will afterwards confer more with you in this matter.

Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

GRAND HALL IN THE ROYAL PALACE OF GRAN. KING STEPHEN ON HIS THRONE. QUEEN GISELA, PRINCE EMERIC, THE PRINCESS OF CROATIA; COUNTS ESTERHAZY, BATHYANY, ERNEST; BISHOPS, THE LEGATE; NOBLES AND MAGYAR CHIEFS ON HIS RIGHT HAND. DEPUTIES FROM THE CITIES ON HIS LEFT.

K. STEPHEN (*Rising.*)

Hear me, ye Magyar chiefs, ye loyal nobles,
Whose deeds so oft drove from this princely land
Destroying war.

Rest from such labours now; a grateful country
Seeks to repay your oft tried lealty.

Thou, Esterhazy, hast long had a sacred claim
On all a king can give.

C. ESTERHAZY (*Kneeling.*)

Most noble sire, I claim no other meed,
Than to have served my king and country well.

K. STEPHEN. *

'Tis now long since thy services began,
But I have ne'er forgot those trying hours,
When Kupan's star
Affrighted Hungary with its baleful lustre;
When Keene and Guyon banded their murderous hordes;
And not a few did speak of missions, envoys, treaties;
Showing by their poor, lukewarm spirit,
How soon a weak soul could lose a noble heritage.

Nor in what fashion thou from those sad days,
 To the last closing strife ;
 Didst ever rather choose the deadliest odds,
 Than soil the Magyar's name by one base word.
 Rise, first and most favoured noble in our realm.

(Count Esterhazy kisses the king's hand, rises, and withdraws.)

Brave Batthyany.

(Count Batthyany comes forward and kneels.)

C. BATTHYANY.—Great king.

K. STEPHEN.

To thee no second praise is due ; oft hath thy arm
 Dammed up the raging floods of scathing war.
 By day nor night hast thou ne'er shrunk from toil ;
 And while thy strategy dismayed our foes,
 The humblest soldier shared thy anxious care.
 Rise, twice enriched.

(Count Batthyany kisses the king's hand and rises.)

Ye other

Nobles and soldiers, if I name ye not,

(The Bishop, Nobles, &c., advance and kneel.)

Think not that I forget your lofty deeds,
 But because time doth press, I must omit
 Your several names, and but thank ye thus
 For priceless aid.

NOBLES, PRELATES, &c.—Eljen Magyar.

(They rise and retire, and the Deputies advance and kneel.)

Ye citizens, whose skill hath made this city,
 Bloom as the lime tree, round which the fretful bees
 Gather in mirthful spring. Ye hardy sons of toil,
 Who gave your blood, your lands, and granaries,
 To ward the foeman's sword from Hungary's neck ;
 For ye the long canal, the solid road
 Shall seam the land, till art and wealth and commerce

Haste to cast anchor at your teeming wharves.

DEPUTIES.—Long life to King Stephen. (*They rise and retire.*)

K. STEPHEN.

And now for one last favour, I'm your suitor ;
Grant us your presence at the nuptial banquet.
Queen Gisela, and the fair lady our son hath chosen,
Await you there,
One day to festive leisure let us give,
And may that day long in our memories live ;
And each man pray who pours the sparkling wine,
The Magyar's land may be bright freedom's shrine.

Curtain falls.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A ROOM IN PRINCESS BERTHA'S CASTLE, AT GRAN.

Enter Andreas and Bertha.

P. BERTHA.—So thou seest at last that Saint Stephen careth as little for thee or thy house, as for all the others that have served his turn. Thou art not as useful as Esterhazy or Batthyany, and he can afford not to speak of thee at his diets.

ANDREAS.—Enough, lady; I will not fail to think of it. But what is this service you require?

P. BERTHA.—This. Not very far from Theben lives a magician, named Zadig, banished for no good deeds from Gran, who hath studied in Egypt and Arabia, and hath learned all the lore of the Copts and Chaldees. He hath a philtre of marvellous power, and when the heir to some great heritage hath drunk of it, he groweth dainty and fadeth away, like a maid that dieth of a broken heart; leaving his place for the nearest of kin. Get me that cure for heart-sickness, and Geraldine shall still be thine.

ANDREAS.—And how shall I get the philtre?

P. BERTHA.—Go thou to Theben; nigh to it lives a monk, called Gervais of the rock. He will guide thee to Zadig's tower, where, for a letter and gold, which I will furnish, the philtre is ours.

ANDREAS.—Hast thou a guide that can take me to Theben unseen? Were Stephen's sharp ears to hear of such an errand, their owner might chance to make us try the virtue of these devil's drops on ourselves.

P. BERTHA.—Take Vazul with thee; he knoweth every bye-path far and near, and though orders are that he shall not come near Gran, thou knowest he will face anything for gold.

ANDREAS.—Aye, that he will; give him a purse and he would beard the devil himself in his grimy den.

P. BERTHA.—Then haste, Andreas; and as much good as I can wish thee be thy portion.

ANDREAS.—Farewell, lady.

Exeunt separately.

SCENE II.

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE OF COUNT ERNEST, AT GRAN. COUNT
ERNEST ALONE.

C. ERNEST.—So the old side hath only need of money and may win now. Bulgaria is ripe; the old feud in Transylvania, like a half cured sore, is ready to break out worse than ever. We want but gold, and I must now risk all to get it; for if I lose, I lose but what I lost by venturing little; and if I win, I can, when king, pay it back with ease. Aye, as king! But it must be so; I have doubted too long. (*Rings: enter a page.*) Waits Elisha, the Jew, outside?

PAGE.—He does, my lord.

C. ERNEST.—Send him in (*exit page*), and let me see if there be such a thing as a Jew that a knight may deal with.

Enter Elisha.

Good morrow, Jew. I am about to give thee that for which thou would'st sell the hair off thy head, and the teeth out of thy jaws. Gold, Jew, gold!

ELISHA.—Heh, heh, heh; your highness is pleased to be witty.

C. ERNEST.—Jew, listen. I am but little given to wit; the Magyar is no mountebank. Now if I give thee broad acres to hold, how much money could'st thou bring me within a week? Mind, Jew, no double dealings; no slinking and sidling up with that false look and glib tongue of thine to make better terms.

ELISHA.—Oh tear, no; not for the world.

C. ERNEST.—Lie not, Jew; thou would'st do it for a ducat more. Tell not to me thy tale about some friend thou did'st count upon, as great a rogue as thyself, who hath failed thee at the last hour, that thou and he may get more usury; forget thy light weights, thy false scales, thy clippings, thy quirks and shufflings.

ELISHA.—Surely, your highness, surely.

C. ERNEST.—Or wer't the last act of my life, I'd have thee flung from the battlements. Ere thou did'st touch the ground, thou would'st wish that for once in thy life thou had'st been an honest man.

ELISHA.—Oh, tear, yes; but I am so poor. How much does the lands yield your highness?

C. ERNEST.—Twenty thousand ducats, yearly, with rare hunting and all rights of forestry.

ELISHA.—And what sum does your highness want; five thousand ducats?

C. ERNEST.—Five thousand ducats, thou plundering knave. Ten times five.

ELISHA.—Oh tear, all our tribe from York to Babylon have not a man could spare so much at one time.

C. ERNEST.—Jew! I will teach thee to try and outwit me. Thy kinsman Aaron shall have the lands in gage, and thou wilt tear thy hair and be wretched till thou can'st again cheat some victim. Nay, waste not my time; away, an honest man ever drives the best bargain.

ELISHA.—Well, I'll try, and your highness won't object to give me a little security; just to sign a little bond?

C. ERNEST.—Why nay, I needs must, when thou would'st not trust Stephen himself on his word; so bring thy miserable instrument with thee and I will sign it, for I learned to write; tho' methinks a true knight should never sign parchment but with the hilt of his sword. And mind, one half of the gold must be paid here to night; the other half a month hence.

ELISHA.—Oh yes, I'll go and get the monies. Let me kiss the hem of your highness's robe.

C. ERNEST.—(*Starting up.*) What, dog, would'st thou defile a noble? Hold back, or I may chance to lop off that dirty claw of thine. Begone, I say, and be silent; not for the sake of my head, but of thy own.

Exit Elisha.

Now welcome thou god of war.

The Christians lied who called thee earth's worst pest,
Sprung from the mighty loins of their feigned Nimrod.
Wise men find out thy fairer side, and while
Thou yielddest such rich prizes to bold spirits;
The pale-faced monks may ban thee for a demon,
And hang themselves for want of true believers. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III.

THE HERMITAGE OF GERVAIS OF THE ROCK, NEAR THEBEN,
AN IMMENSE CASTELLATED ROCK, AT THE CONFLUENCE OF
THE MARCH AND DANUBE. GERVAIS (*Solus*) AT A TABLE
WITH A FLAGON IN HIS HAND.

Really this is too hard upon me ; I'm not quite so young as I was twenty years ago, and I shall have to bestir myself or people will talk about this matter ; nothing could be more unlucky than for the holy father to smother himself in the marsh last night, after leaving this comfortable little nook, instead of having been to shrive a dirty boor. I'm afraid he took a glass more than was good for him. Ah dear here's to his soul (*drinks*), and to his successor's health (*drinks*). He was a man who knew the value of a venison pasty and a glass of good wine. To think how he used to hold spiritual converse here (*drinks*). I hope something will happen to make me wanted, an earthquake or a fire, or people will— (*A loud knock at the door.*) Hallo, what the devil's that ? The holy father back from the realms of bliss ?

(*Enter Vazul and Andreas.*)

VAZUL.—Your pardon, monk ; I am not a holy father, neither do I come from the realms of bliss.

GERVAIS.—Little need hast thou to say that thou art a man of sin ; thy garb and air betray thee. Friends, why do ye disturb a poor sinner at his devotions ?

VAZUL.—Merely, sir monk, for this reason ; we are bound for the magician, thy friend, and we need thy guidance to his lair.

GERVAIS.—And do'st thou think, thou son of Belial, that I will venture forth at this hour on such an errand? I am racked with gout and have but a tender stomach, youth; my cough and asthma, and stitch in the side make night travelling dangerous, to say nought of wolves and robbers, (*Aside*, which ye may be.)

VAZUL.—Holy father, weigh not matters too nicely; choose, in haste, whether thou wilt for a brief space quit this little paradise of thine to gather honey (*shewing him a purse*), or thou wilt go with sore bones, and an empty pouch.

GERVAIS.—(*Taking the purse*) Graceless sinner, would'st thou lift thy hand against a servant of the Church?

VAZUL.—Aye, truly, against the blessed sanctified Pope himself; so don thy mantle, and hasten thee.

GERVAIS.—Then get thee gone, reprobate; with such as thee I go not forth (*Aside*, especially in the dark).

VAZUL.—(*Striking him several times with the blade of his sword*) Now then, in Lucifer's name, wilt thou try the strength of my arm again?

GERVAIS.—(*Jumping up*) Murder! Damnation! Whoo! What fiend sent thee hither?

ANDREAS.—Nay, Vazul, strike not the holy father so; thou will't never get to heaven if thou art so rude with the Church.

GERVAIS.—(*Aside*, To heaven indeed! Why, he's gone beyond redemption already, and all the holy water in Rome would not put out the fire that's burning for him.)

VAZUL.—Now thou talkest like a man of sense, father Gervais; she that sent us wanted thy aid in our errand, and thy blessing on it.

ANDREAS.—Good Gervais, I beseech thee lead us forthwith to Zadig. Our case admits of no respite.

GERVAIS.—My son, thou speakest fair, and I will go, but first refresh thee after thy toils. (*Aside, I will, I know. Goes to a cupboard.*)

VAZUL.—Tarry not long, monk.

GERVAIS.—(*Bringing out an armful of pasties and bottles.*) Hearken, strong, valiant youth; this poor frame is wearied with wrestling against the ills of life and craveth sustenance. (*Aside, the miscreant hath the strength of a bear in his arm; my back will ache for a week.*)

VAZUL.—(*Emptying a goblet, and seizing a pasty.*) Dost thou always fare in this wise, pious man?

GERVAIS.—My son, frail mortals like myself need the aid of wine against our natural weakness. (*Aside, the youth hath a good perception.*)

VAZUL.—The wine is capital (*drinking off another goblet*), Gervais, thou had'st this from the cellar of some rich penitent who had once cheated his neighbours of their vineyards, and was afraid of going where he'd get none.

ANDREAS.—Say, monk, when shall we set forth?

VAZUL.—After supper.

GERVAIS.—My son, over eagerness is like a greedy fish, that swalloweth the hook when he meaneth only to catch the bait. From sunset to sunrise the great Zadig passes the hours like myself, in prayer and rest. At break of day will be early enough (*Vazul drinks another goblet. Aside, That youth's draught is marvellous.*)

VAZUL.—Right, holy father, I drink to thy weal; 'twere not a bad idea to turn monk. (*Drinks again*)

GERVAIS.—(*Aside, The miscreant's stomach hath as hard a coat of mail as his broad back To Andreas*). Son, the blessing of pious men is on the wine; drink a little, I prithee.

ANDREAS.—As thou will't, so thou do but guide us.

GERVAIS.—Fear not. (*To Vazul,*) Friend, I drink in the hope I may guide thee to better thoughts.

VAZUL.—Thy health, father ; perdition seize me if I love not the holy order.

GERVAIS.—Swear not, sweet youth (*Aside*, Godless reprobate I should say), I warrant me now, my child, thou hast been brought up in evil ways. Tell me, is it true that there are men so sinful as to sing of love and drinking, and dwelling in courts, and riding to the chase bravely dressed, with hawk and hound ?

VAZUL.—(*Drinking*) Marry, there are, and jolly men they be.

GERVAIS.—Then I would, but not of evil curiosity, hear thee sing a stave or two, that I might better know in what wise to combat the evil.

VAZUL.—Faith, if thou will't give me a stoup more of that brave wine, I will sing thee twenty and thou shall join chorus.

GERVAIS.—And I, my son of the strong arm, will humour thee and this sweet youth will join us.

ANDREAS.—Why there's no other way, for I can't go alone.

GERVAIS.—Come then, my children, let us betake ourselves to another chamber, where idle passers-by may not hear us, and think we are solacing ourselves with carnal music. A youth I am training will bring a fitting pittance of these poor animal comforts. Come, children.

Sings.

Then a song for my glass, and round let it pass,

Since it brings neither sin nor sorrow.

Good wine let us quaff, and merrily laugh,

And let grim care wait for the morrow.

Exeunt arm-in-arm.

SCENE IV.

A STREET IN GRAN. ENTER ILDEGONDE AND GERALDINE
FROM ONE SIDE, A PAGE FROM THE OTHER.

GERALDINE.—Why, Ildegonde, here is our youthful sage's imp, our philosopher's Mercury. Say, boy, what new freak is thy master labouring under? He hath been everything but a wise man; hath he betaken himself to that trade?

PAGE.—Lady, he hath grown more foolish than ever; he hath married.

GERALDINE.—What; a milk-maid, with her sweet breath and coarse paws?

PAGE.—Say, rather, he hath began to love gold and good quality. The lady is the daughter of king Cresimir.

GERALDINE.—Thou brat if thou dost think to bandy foolery with me I will have thee scourged till thou mendest thy manners. Thy master wed the daughter of Cresimir! Had'st thou not better call thyself bridegroom to the lady?

PAGE.—Believe it or not, madam; that lover was the son of king Stephen, and his memory of old love hath made him send me hither.

GERALDINE.—To ask me to come and see his dame?

PAGE.—No, madam; but to warn you that king Stephen hath heard rumours of your lady mother which pleased him little.

GERALDINE.—Let his father and my mother settle that; I

want not his advice. He trusted thee ; say, why did he not proclaim his rank at first ?

PAGE.—Because he thought the heart ought to be given away before the hand.

GERALDINE.—Knave, if thou art going to copy his style, get thee gone. Leave us : dost thou hear ? (*Exit Page.*) I have been a fool in this, and thou, who hast stepped in between me and a crown, may the foul leprosy speckle thy skin till thou art a spectre thy vilest menial shall turn from.

Exit, followed by Ildegonde.

SCENE V.

A ROOM IN PRINCESS BERTHA'S CASTLE AT GRAN.

Enter Bertha, followed by a girl in chains ; after whom two men, one bearing a headsman's axe. At a signal from Bertha they enter a room at the back and close the door. She then rings.

Enter an Attendant.

P. BERTHA.—Send hither the Servian, Godolphin (*Exit attendant*). The youth is reckless, hates the Christians, and loves this girl.

(Enter Godolphin.)

Godolphin, I need thy aid, and thou thy courage. Serve me

and thou shalt be free and rich ; refuse or play me false, and thou diest.

GODOLPHIN.—Say, what shall I do, lady?

P. BERTHA.—First I will shew thee what I can do. (*Claps her hands ; the door opens and displays the maiden on the block, and the headsman standing over her with uplifted axe.*)

GODOLPHIN.—(*Throwing himself at her feet.*) Strike me first, thou devil. Nay, frown not at me, thou cankered witch ; thy own deed hath broken the spell of servitude.

P. BERTHA.—(*To the attendants,* Harm not the maiden, but watch her closely, and let her be tended as a lady. (*The door is closed. To Godolphin*) Rise, youth, thy wild humour is forgiven. Thou didst not know she was in my hands ; but I have paid the price for her capture, and I must have thy services. (*Godolphin rises*) Now thou seest thy best laid plot for treachery may cost her her head ; but be true, and thou shalt have the maid and a fair dowry.

GODOLPHIN.—Promise to spare her and I will do thy bidding, were it to stab great Stephen on his throne.

P. BERTHA.—(*Smiling*) Another time thy zeal may serve thee. All thou hast to do now is to go disguised as a royal page, and look bold at those who watch thee ; fear not, for a friend will be near. Enter at the hour of supper, and on a sign from thy friend, pour a philtre, which I will give thee, into a cup which the prince only drinks from ; then leave as thou didst go, unseen, mind, cost what it may. Dost thou comprehend me ?

GODOLPHIN.—Aye, lady.

P. BERTHA.—Thou wilt need to be sure of purpose, swift of foot, stealthy and bold ; and thy tribe is like the gos-hawk, one hour too fierce, and another too fearful.

GODOLPHIN.—Lady, we fear but slavery and are fierce only to our foes.

P. BERTHA.—Well, I will try thee ; thou shalt have the dress of a page, and be taught all his pert airs. In three days with thy wit thou wilt be as great a jackanapes as the best of them. And now, away, and forget not Adelaide.

Exeunt separately.

SCENE VI.

AN OPEN SPACE FACING A THICKET NEAR ZADIG'S TOWER.
VIEW OF THEBEN IN THE DISTANCE. ENTER VAZUL AND
ANDREAS.

VAZUL.—(*Sitting down on a bank*) By my troth, Andreas, we'd better have left the old monk at the head of the table. He's at the bottom of the green Danube now, and our chance of getting to Zadig gone with him.

ANDREAS.—Yes ; but who had thought him fool enough to get up while the boat was lurching in that gust.

VAZUL.—Well, if he didn't sail straight down it wasn't for want of ballast. He must have frightened the fishes when he went to the bottom.

ANDREAS.—But your wisest fish, Vazul, is a noodle when his palate's concerned in the matter, and thou may'st swear that all the pike in the neighbourhood are swimming away for life to get a peck at his red nose.

VAZUL.—'Tis lucky I brought some of his provender, or we might have starved as well as waited. (*Pulling out a pasty and bottle.*) Prithee sit down, Andreas, and stand not

there like a suit of clothes stuffed with hay to keep it in form.
(*Andreas sits down.*)

(*The Monk appears.*)

(*Jumping up*) S'death! hast thou cheated the fishes and the devil at one turn?

GERVAIS.—Youth, heaven watched over my life.

ANDREAS.—Say, rather, 'twas thy fat kept thee from sinking.

VAZUL.—Marvel not, Andreas, the holy man is so full of the spirit, that he could no more sink than St. John of Nepomucene. 'Twas lucky he had some light matter in him, or he had filled and gone down like a leaky boat,

GERVAIS.—My children, I am somewhat faint, and being short of breath by reason of toil and fasting—

VAZUL.—(*Giving him a cup of wine*) Here, monk, haste thee and prate not. 'Tis late; have we yet time?

GERVAIS.—(*Drinking a tumbler*) Time enough, son, for a smart youth like thee, who hath legs to carry his body and wit to guide his legs. 'Tis but a league or two, and if thou hast good soles to thy boots thou wilt be able to travel so far.

VAZUL.—Come, then, father. And now if that jaundiced moon will but show her nose at her garden wicket, I'll pray for the old jade the first time I'm at my devotions. (*Shouts*)

Shine out thou bilious orb and light the way,

Lest in this cursed waste we go astray.

Exeunt Omnes.

SCENE VII.

A ROOM IN THE MAGICIAN'S TOWER, FITTED UP WITH ALL THE
IMPLEMENTS OF SORCERY. ZADIG AND GERTRUDE.

ZADIG.—Girl, what noise was that ?

GERTRUDE.—Master, I heard no noise.

ZADIG.—'Tis false, thou chit ; I grow old and failing, and
thou cheatest me with thy tricks and quiffs ; I am too aged
for thy sharp wit. Hast thou done thy work ?

GERTRUDE.—Yes, master.

ZADIG.—Then take thy lute and sing me a song.

(Gertrude goes out of the room for her lute.)

This is the day the old witch told me I should die and by my
own hand, and now the day's past. I took care the old
harrikan should lie, and I hope she lies in a hot place, the
old viper, though I sent her to a cold one for her first night's
rest on the journey.

(Gertrude returns with the lute.)

Girl, I had thee taught all the book lore when I took thee to
Athens and Bagdad, that thou might'st be a bride for my old
age, chuck. I'll make thee a better husband than a young
good-for-nothing who can do nought but sing and fence, and
who would soon leave thee for a new love. Let me hear if
thou hast not forgotten thy books.

(Gertrude Sings.)

1.

The lord of day his car hath quit,
And deep beneath the blue sea-wave
He rests, while fair nymphs round him wait
In the gem-lighted, coral cave.

With jewelled brow and silver robe,
 The chaste cold queen, the lovers' friend,
 Silent and slow on her bright car
 O'er night's vast slopes her way doth wend.

2.

The bulbul wooes the blushing rose ;
 The violet yields her sweetest breath ;
 Toil-wearied man sinks to repose,
 And nature slumbers calm as death.
 But where is he, to me more dear
 Than heaven above or earth below ?
 Why comes he not this heart to share,
 These joys to taste, this bliss to know ?

ZADIG.—What dost thou see from the window that thou lookest so hard ?

GERTRUDE.—Three travellers, sir, and one is young and of goodly mien. Shall I lower the drawbridge ?

ZADIG.—Ah, have I caught thee at thy pranks, thou cat ? Thou would'st see the man because he is young. Have a care, or I will turn thee into a hare for dogs to hunt, or into a cur, and then scullions and serving-boys will kick and starve thee. (*A horn is sounded, and the voice of Gervais is heard shouting "Zadig."*)

ZADIG.—Gervais, thou pig, thou pyramid of blubber, thou mound of suet, I'll murder thee for coming to-day, my pious friend. (*From the window*) Away, or I'll hurl down boiling oil on your heads ; ye shall be cooked in your own fat, ye miscreants.

GERVAIS.—(*Without*) Zadig, be not a fool. I bring thee a youth who payeth well, and will see thee whether he pay or not for the treat.

ZADIG.—Oh, Gervais, my excellent friend, I'll take my change out of thee for this. Thou shall't have pleurisies, my

sweet, and ague, and colic, till thou could'st burn thy own mother for spite.

(A crash is heard at the outer door.)

VAZUL.—*(Without)* Let us in, man; we mean thee no harm; do'st thou think soldiers care for thy threats? Set thy portals ajar, or we may set thy den on fire and stifle thee like a badger in his hole.

ZADIG.—*(Wandering to and fro)* Gervais, thou had'st best take wing or I will send goblins to thy couch to prick and pinch thee; toads shall spit upon thy meat; imps, thou holy porpoise, shall waste thy wine and ride on thy vats. I will send a black cat to sit on thy fat chest at nights and make thee dream of thy future home.

(A louder crash is heard at the door.)

(From the window.)

Avaunt, ye men of violence, or my spells shall launch ye To the far Caucasus, where on the glacier throned Hoar winter reigns.——

VAZUL.—*(Outside)* Go to the gallows thou old idiot with thy raving. Let down the drawbridge or I will make carrion of thee *(Another crash)*.

ZADIG.—Child, let them in, they are breaking in the outer wicket. I may as well be killed by the old jade's cantrips as by these brawlers; but if I live, my friend Gervais; Oh my dear Gervais, won't I? *(She goes to a corner of the room and turns a large wheel, which lowers a couple of chains.)*

Enter Gervais and Andreas.

GERVAIS.—Save ye, great Zadig, I bring thee a discreet youth, as well laden with gold as a good bee with honey.

ZADIG.—He is welcome *(Aside, With a curse on ye both)*. Save thee, youth, what is thy will at this late hour?

ANDREAS.—To make thee rich father, and gain thy good will.

ZADIG.—What shall I do for thee, youth? Show thee thy true love in a glass; make thee famous and happy, or give thee the favour of high-born dames?

ANDREAS.—Neither, father; but do thou give me what this letter asketh for and this shall be thy guerdon, (*giving him a letter, and showing him a large bag of money.*)

ZADIG.—(*Reading, Aside,* So the lady will be quit of some one that knoweth a dangerous secret, or will soothe the pangs of some relation who is sick at heart, and hath lands to leave. Wise, sweet dame; did all know the use of my philtre war would cease to plague this stupid earth. Sword and axe may fail, but the philtre always hits the bull's eye). Father, I pray thee withdraw; 'tis not safe to look upon the spirits. (*Gervais withdraws; Zadig looks about; Gertrude retires further into the corner so that he cannot see her; Vazul gets in at the window where Gertrude stands.*)

VAZUL.—(*Aside,* 'Twas here I saw the little queen of a woman. Gervais fabled up that story about the old enchanter's bewitching us, if all three went in, to keep out a rival. By heavens, here she is. Hist, maiden; what mummeries this old sorcerer at? *Gertrude puts her hand upon his arm, and her fingers upon her lips.*)

ZADIG.—(*To Andreas*) Sit here, good youth. (*Motioning him to a seat opposite the table; Andreas takes the seat assigned him*) and speak not till the spirits be gone, or they will rend thee in pieces.

VAZUL.—(*To Gertrude.* Ah, I see thou art afraid; but fear not, child, if he seek to do thee ill, I'll roast the old fox at his own kitchen fire and baste him with the fat monk. 'Twill be long ere he scorch, for the holy man hath more tallow on his ribs than a bear in October. (*Meanwhile Zadig arranges various implements of sorcery upon the table, and seven chafing dishes in a circle, upon which dishes he sprinkles certain*

powders. A red fire appears in each chafing dish. Then taking his wand, and placing himself by the side of Andreas, before the table, he recites; seven spirits appear, dimly seen behind the table; the lights burn blue.)

ZADIG.—Great spirits bend ye to the potent charm,
 Or dread the might of wrathful Belial's arm.
 Grant me your help the matchless prize to gain;
 The prize ye yield to vigils, toil and pain.
 Then be your reign as long as earth shall rest
 On its firm base, by lust and sin possessed.
 Long as the river flows, and fire shall burn,
 And time's swift wheel shall on its axle turn.
 Long as the sun shall chase the gaping dawn,
 And earth shall rise exulting in the morn.
 Say, will ye aid me?

(The spirits bow their heads, and each points to the centre of the table. A beautiful casket rises in the middle of it.

ZADIG.—Thanks, faithful spirits. *(The spirits vanish slowly, the lights burn red again; Zadig unlocks the casket, and withdraws the philtre.)* Here is the philtre, youth, bear it as though thou did'st carry thy life in thy hand.

ANDREAS.—I thank thee, Zadig; Here is thy fee. *(Giving him the bag of gold.)*

ZADIG.—Adieu, my son; would all men were clever women *(Exit Andreas)*. And thou *(Kissing the purse)*, Let me feel thee, see thee, tumble thee, mumble thee; thou amulet 'gainst all the ills of life. Thou shall't dwell safely now in good keeping, in my strong box, sweet. *(Puts out all the lamps but one, which he takes in his hand, and moves towards Gertrude.)*

GERTRUDE.—*(To Vazul, trying the door. Mercy on us, what shall we do? The door is locked.)*

ZADIG.—*(Seeing Gertrude)* Ah! Thou accursed hobgoblin,

thou rosy-lipped imp of Lucifer ; thou kitten-faced mischief ;
I'll cure thee of prying.

GERTRUDE.—Pity, my lord.

ZADIG.—Pity, thou whelp of sin ; thou would'st raise up
the great lord of Theben against me, with tales of my gold.
Dost thou think I will risk death by stake and water for
thy pretty eyes ? (*Opening a trap-door, and stuffing the bag of
money into his pouch.*)

VAZUL.—(*To Gertrude, drawing his sword.* Maiden,
stand back, the old knave means mischief. If he comes nigh
thee I will see if age hath made his hide tough enow to
turn the point of my sword.)

ZADIG.—I'll drop thee in the Danube. Thou shall't keep
watch in my cellar, where thou canst not see quite so well.
(*Drops the lamp down the trap.*) There, Satan hath helped
thee to a little more light. (*Moves towards where Gertrude
stands, Vazul steps hastily towards him.*) What in the
name of the foul fiend is that ? (*Turns aside, and falls down
the trap, clinging to the edge.*) Help, dear child ; I forgive
thee. Help, the gold weighs me down ; perdition on thee.
(*Falls.*)

GERTRUDE.—Merciful heaven, he is lost ; he alone hath
the key of the door below.

VAZUL.—Quick, maiden, a light. (*She lights a lamp at a
small fire, and gives it to Vazul.*)

VAZUL.—(*Looking down*) Sweet girl, thou hast 'scaped
a cold night's lodging. I see naught but a black stream
flowing.

GERTRUDE.—Sir, I have heard the old dame, who died
here suddenly but a little while ago, say in her hour of
passion that there were spells in the cellar, that filled more
money bags than those above ground.

VAZUL.—Aye, and she spoke wisely, girl. Leave this vile den and follow me. Get what thou hast, while I will make free with the old knave's gold, if thou will't but tell me where he hoarded it. He can't come back to claim it.

GERTRUDE.—(*Throwing a mantle over her head*) Alack, sir, I have but little, and would fain leave it behind; but he kept his savings there (*pointing to a chest*).

VAZUL.—(*Takes down a pole-axe, bursts open the chest, and takes out several bags*) Then I'll carry it for thee. Ah, here are the pickings of dead men's bones; we'll spend them better than their owners did. Come, girl.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

PRINCESS BERTHA'S CASTLE AT GRAN. PRINCESS BERTHA AND
COUNT ERNEST.

C. ERNEST.—Yes, Bertha, we are prospering ; I have had king Stephen called away still further to crush out the revolt, and ere he returns, his son will be an angel, and there will be a friend filling his place.

P. BERTHA.—And the deed ?

C. ERNEST.—Is framed. Emeric will sign it, and the nobles dare not dispute it.

P. BERTHA.—What of Vazul ?

C. ERNEST.—The king still thinks he is best off in banishment, where he hath less wine to drink and less money to spend on thy sex.

P. BERTHA.—But with all this the work is but half done ; Stephen still lives.

C. ERNEST.—And will live, for me.

P. BERTHA.—So the fish will not rise till the hook is better gilded.

C. ERNEST.—Smear on the gilding as thick as thou wilt ; I touch not Stephen's life.

P. BERTHA.—Others can do that for thee ; wouldst thou let the lion go, when thou mayst never have him in the toils again ?

C. ERNEST.—Yes, when I have clipped his claws and drawn his tusks.

P. BERTHA.—And thou wilt find he can grow a second set. He was born a soldier, and will die biting.

C. ERNEST.—Press me further, and I withdraw.

P. BERTHA.—Nay, thou shalt not have cause ; but some day thou wilt find that Stephen will throw thee like a treacherous steed thou thinkest to have tamed. Thou art but half a foe ; Stephen gone, who so fit to fill the throne as thou ? Vazul cares more for the spigot than for the crown ; and Andreas and Bela might settle their rival claims in the court of Odin.

C. ERNEST.—Brave Bertha ! Fate meant thee for a throne, but nature, like a careless slut, left half the work for thee to finish. But there is much that calls me away. Farewell.

P. BERTHA.—Farewell, Count.

Exeunt separately.

SCENE II.

ROYAL PALACE AT GRAN. PRINCE EMERIC LYING ON A COUCH
IN A ROOM LOOKING OUT UPON THE GARDEN.

P. EMERIC.—Once more cool morn dawns on my fevered
brow ;

Once more the blazing lamp of Phœbus rouses the
world

To daily toil. Toil that doth change

The desert courser to a mangy hack ;

The hardy offspring of the warrior and the hunter,

Into a pack of squalid, gambling knaves.
Faugh ! I am sick of all such life can bring.

Enter Count Ernest, who stops on seeing the Prince.

P. EMERIC.—(*Not seeing Count Ernest.*)

There was a time my soul illumed my frame
As light doth cheer the darker dross of earth ;
But now, or this poor mind hath wed a corpse,
Or this weak clay doth carry a dead soul.

(*Looking up*) Your pardon, Count, I saw you not. Tell me sir, you have been a soldier, is it not a murderous trade to kill men ?

C. ERNEST.—Aye, Prince, but 'tis better to kill than to be killed. (*Aside, Great Zadig, had'st thou not died so soon, thou had'st been immortal.*)

P. EMERIC.—Then take thy dagger and kill me ; save me from dying like a worn-out hound.

C. ERNEST.—But sir, if you are so ill, 'twere best, in your royal father's absence, you should depute some one who might fill your place.

P. EMERIC.—Thou art right ; recall Vazul.

C. ERNEST.—To that, sire, your royal father had not agreed, were he here.

P. EMERIC.—I name Andreas and Bela, then.

C. ERNEST.—And put strife between the two for the most power ; they are but true to one another now, because they have nought to fight for. Let me say rather some old tried servant to your father's liking.

P. EMERIC.—(*Languidly,*) Aye, thyself ; but be quick Count and call some of the council, I am worse.

C. ERNEST.—Here is such a deed, (*Producing a parchment*) which I have as yet forborne to show, not wishing to arouse your fears.

P. EMERIC.—Fears, dost thou think a scholar feareth death more than a knight? Do shield and mail-coat protect more than the robe against his unerring stroke? But quick, sir, I grow faint.

C. ERNEST.—(*Aside, looking round*, Perdition on the head of him who took away the writing materials; he is going fast. *Rings violently*) What, ho ye knaves! (*Two pages rush in*) Pen and ink ye rascals, fly one of you for them (*Exit one page*).

P. EMERIC.—(*Starting up with a cry*) Give me thy arm; I die; lead me to my chamber.

C. ERNEST.—(*Aside, now could I do thy bidding with my dagger's point; but there is yet time*) Lean on me prince, I pray you; help, boy (*to the other page*) to bear the prince up. What, ho there, without. (*Exeunt, Leading Prince Emeric.*)

SCENE III.

A STREET LEADING FROM THE ROYAL PALACE AT GRAN. ENTER
ELISHA AND AARON, MEETING.

ELISHA.—Good morrow, Aaron; how's your sweet lady and the tear children? And how's your son, little Isaac?

AARON.—Little Isaac's dead. Little angel only weighed seven pounds the day he died; and how's Ben Shusan?

ELISHA.—Oh, very bad. His wife's had three doctors to see him yesterday; clever woman, that, Aaron, sold them all good bargains and cleared a deal of monies. Doctors say he can't live:

AARON.—Oh, Moses, I hope he won't die; he owes me ten ducats, oh, vot a pity.

ELISHA.—Heh, heh, isn't dat gut? He owes me fifty. (*Aside, on securities.*)

AARON.—Oh yes, but I have'nt got no acknowledgment. Oh tear me, how vile and wicked after lucre some persons is. Anything to sell, Elisha?

ELISHA.—Only a beautiful little ring; cost such a teal of monies, Aaron; all I had in de world.

AARON.—Oh, give us de ring; let's see de ring.

ELISHA.—(*Showing it*) Look here, such a beauty. Cost eighty ducats.

AARON.—Well, I'll give you fifty.

ELISHA.—Oh, what a man it is; say seventy-five.

AARON.—No, I don't mind fifty-five, to a friend like yourself, you know.

ELISHA.—Say seventy, and I'll give you such a beautiful laced coat into the bargain.

AARON.—No; sixty, or I musht go.

ELISHA.—Oh, I shall be ruined, I know I shall; well, here it is (seeing that Aaron is moving off).

AARON.—(*Snatches the ring, and pays him out the ducats*) Oh tear, Elisha, it's a teal of monies. (*Aside, Wonder how much Elisha's made by de bargain.*)

ELISHA.—(*Aside, Now he must not let any one know I sold him stolen goods.*) Thou will't swear of course on the Talmud, to say thou did'st buy it of a poor pilgrim?

AARON.—Not this time, for nothing, Elisha; I must have ten ducats back for swearing.

ELISHA.—Then will I swear away thy life, thou Philistine, thou hast taken a hundred per cent. against the laws of Hungary.

AARON.—Do it, thou Amalekite, and I will tell the Rabbi thou hast defiled thy faith. Thou hast not kept the white fast, and hast eaten pork with the wild youth

Illezhazy, to get usury from him. Ah, hah, Elisha, my tear, thou lookest bilious.

ELISHA.—So thou will't jeopardy my life, pig, eh? (*Raises his staff and strikes him.*)

AARON.—(*Drawing his knife*) Thou old usurer, I will teach thee to strike one of the house of Levi. (*Rushes at him, Elisha strikes the knife from his hand; Aaron catches hold of the staff, and they rush round the stage, striking with the hand that is free.*)

BOTH.—Leave go; murder! help! he's killing me. Fire! thieves!

Enter an Officer and Four Guards.

OFFICER.—What the plague ails ye, that ye make this heathenish riot, ye black wretches? Can ye not live by plundering honest people, without flying at each other's throats? But that ye are so near the palace I'd let ye tear each other to pieces like wild cats. Leave go, I say, or I'll hack your hands off. (*To the guards*) Here carry these two men to the prison by the east gate of the palace, till we know what the king may say to it.

ELISHA.—(*Throwing himself at the officer's feet.*) Oh, mercy, sweet sir, dear lord.

AARON.—(*Prostrating himself*) Oh, my lord, think of our wives and children.

OFFICER.—Ye should have thought of them sooner. Ye knew the king hath set the penalty of death on the drawing of weapons in the city. Were ye the two first nobles in the land, I would send you to the gatehouse.

ELISHA.—Oh, tear sir, won't he let ush out again?

OFFICER.—Yes, he will let ye out on the day ye are hanged, each between a pair of dogs; begone.

Exit Guards and Jews, followed by the Officer.

SCENE IV.

A ROOM AT PRINCESS BERTHA'S CASTLE AT GRAN.

ILDEGONDE AND GERALDINE.

ILDEGONDE.—Lady, are you not sad that your mother tarries so long?

GERALDINE.—Nay, dame; my mother hath long had the trick of making me feel pleased when she is away. Besides, we are but too much alike, and I owe her little thanks and less duty.

ILDEGONDE.—Nay, lady, say not so.

GERALDINE.—And why not, madam? 'Tis the truth.

ILDEGONDE.—Aye, lady, but you know there are times when silence is better than truth itself.

(A cry outside "Lady Geraldine.")

GERALDINE.—That's me. Do thou go, Ildegonde, and see what that clamour means.

(A page rushes in.)

PAGE.—Save yourself, lady, the guard is in the house.

(Enter an Officer.)

OFFICER.—I crave pardon, madam; But Count Batthyany's orders are imperative, you must leave this house under my care.

GERALDINE.—*(Rising)* And why, sir? What means this outrage in my mother's absence?

OFFICER.—This outrage, madam, your mother had shared but for her absence.

GERALDINE.—(*Ring*) Thou lying ruffian. Boy, tell the warder to close the gates. Ildegonde, do thou hasten to the court.

OFFICER.—Ho, there, (*Enter two soldiers*) Lady, they pass not but at the peril of their lives. Choose the path I offer to you, or be borne to prison like a felon.

GERALDINE.—And whither doth that path lead?

OFFICER.—To the convent!

GERALDINE.—(*Sinking down on a seat*) To the convent?

OFFICER.—Yes; for which you may thank your lady mother's plots. Hasten, I pray you ladies, to prepare yourselves.

GERALDINE.—(*Throwing herself on Ildegonde's neck*) Oh, Ildegonde, thou wilt go with me. But 'tis no time for weakness; no tears for this outrage shall fall from the last daughter of my house.

ILDEGONDE.—Lady, bear the affront as beneath your rank; it cannot be that the king meaneth more than a threat.

GERALDINE.—Then can'st thou not read aright the book of fate.

If Stephen hath not lost all sense of pity,

Yet there are those around him that will scout it

As more than weakness.

The dreamy spring-time of my youth hath passed,

And I have woke to the realities of life;

Those stern words made the false spell to melt.

Come, Ildegonde, let's learn to change our style,

Grow meek and pious, and cast down our eyes;

Forget the pleasant world, its joys and troubles,

For a stone cell, whose dark and lonesome air

Changes the blithest soul immured therein,

To a ghastly mockery of the human image.

OFFICER.—Ladies, say, are you prepared?

GERALDINE.—Aye, sir, we follow whereso'er ye lead.

'Tis but the self same end whate'er the road.

OFFICER.—Lady, I beseech you think not the case so hopeless.

GERALDINE.—Nay, keep your soothing, sir, for those who need it ;

For were I hoodwinked I could spy out my goal.

ILDEGONDE.—I beseech you, dear lady Geraldine, take comfort.

GERALDINE.—Comfort, Ildegonde. Such words fall on the wretch's ear

As autumn winds speak to the withered leaves,
Stoney-eyed ruthless fate, with unmoving finger,
Points to my cheerless future ; henceforth my path
Lies through a hideous, darkened, joyless waste ;
An ever narrowing ring, amidst whose gloom
The convent portal yawns like the hungry tomb.

Exit, followed by Ildegonde and the Officer.

SCENE V.

A ROOM IN KING STEPHEN'S PALACE AT GRAN.

KING STEPHEN AND VAZUL.

K. STEPHEN.—Yes, Vazul, thou might'st help me now ;
I fear some ill is hatching, and thou art sharp-witted enough.
Dost thou think thou can'st be as discreet as thou art brave ?

VAZUL.—Aye, uncle ; give me a trial.

K. STEPHEN.—'Twas born with thee to use a lance,
break a horse, and empty a flagon ; can'st thou manage
thy tongue as well ?

VAZUL.—Your excellency, he that would rise at court, hath more need to learn the craft and mystery of silence than to know his letters.

K. STEPHEN.—Would'st thou rise at court?

VAZUL.—Yes, sire, I love the life of a man that hath always money to spend, good dinners to eat, and fine raiment to wear. Gold soothes every sorrow.

K. STEPHEN.—Well, thou hast been poor and knowest what the word means.

VAZUL.—Aye, uncle; he that hath kept company with poverty, wotteth how constant a spouse she is. She gets up with a man in the morning and lies down with him at night. She is by his side, fair weather and foul; revel or wailing, and will no more be shaken off by a rough word, than a hard rider by a bad steed.

K. STEPHEN.—Good, thou art the man I want; be to me a son, Vazul, and thou shall't have no reason to rue thy apprenticeship. Learn to be what Emeric was.

VAZUL.—(*Kneeling*) Uncle, I swear not to abuse the trust thou hast honoured me with; foolish I have been, but never have I broken the word of a noble, and that is now passed to thee, to stand by thy house, and seek honourably to fill poor Emeric's place.

K. STEPHEN.—Rise, Vazul, I will trust fearlessly in thy honour. I have ever wished to deal lighter by thee than I did. (*Vazul rises.*)

Enter an Officer of the Guard.

OFFICER.—(*Who kneels, and then rises*) So please your excellency, two Jews, named Elisha and Aaron, were in your absence taken in the act of brawling within bowshot of the palace; shall we take them before the lower chamber?

K. STEPHEN.—No, send them up to me.

OFFICER.—This ring, the cause of their quarrel, these papers, and this money were all found on them. (*Places them on the table.*)

K. STEPHEN.—Lay by the money and ring, and give hither the papers. (*The officer obeys*) Now leave us for awhile. (*The officer bows and leaves the room.*) Vazul, knowest thou this Jew, Elisha?

VAZUL.—(*Aside, More than I like him.*) Right well, sire; he is a dirty cur, who looks as if he had been fried in his own fat and the grease had come thro' his gaberdine; an old knave who had sworn his soul away ere this if he had a soul to lose.

K. STEPHEN.—Tell me, Vazul, how would'st thou deal with these Jews?

VAZUL.—Your excellency, I would not deal with them at all; for he that holdeth much parley with a Jew, will soon learn to live in a kennel like a rat, hate fair daylight worse than an owl, and shun clean water as a cat doth.

K. STEPHEN.—Then what would'st thou do with them wer't thou king of Hungary?

VAZUL.—Shave their beards, and take toll of their money-bags. Lastly, I would burn down their dirty nests, which nought but fire would sweeten.

K. STEPHEN.—Why wouldst thou use them so roughly?

VAZUL.—Because, sire, I like not to see fair ducats got by foul roguery, and honest dogs starve while curs run off with the dainties.

K. STEPHEN.—Good. Thou will't have a sharp wit when thy feathers are grown: and now I pray thee see to the matters we spoke of.

VAZUL.—Trust me, sire, and 'till I bring good news, adieu. (*Vazul leaves, and King Stephen takes up the papers.*)

K. STEPHEN.—A mortgage on a noble's lands! What means this? Is treason always as sure to be a brewing about

me as a thunderstorm in summer? But here are they that have helped to conjure it up.

(Enter Officer and two Guards with Elisha and Aaron.)

ELISHA AND AARON. — *(Both kneeling)*. Mercy, great king, for the poor Jew!

K. STEPHEN. — Ye knew the price of brawling in the palace grounds; was your feud so fierce that ye cast away life to quell it?

ELISHA AND AARON. — *(Both.)* Oh, king, this man wanted to rob me of ten ducats.

K. STEPHEN. — What, then, 'twas for your vile gain ye risked your heads?

ELISHA. — Mercy, sire!

K. STEPHEN. — Mercy; yea, such as ye have ever shown
When bad days gave ye power.

Ye that in the riot of your devilish lusts,
Did rack each white-haired sire and feeble dame—
Butchered their stalwart sons, defiled their daughters,
Hacked off the infant's tender limbs before the eyes
Of frantic mothers; truly ye need mercy;
Ye who like slot-hounds for a scrap of gold
Hunt down the sick, the widow and the orphan.

ELISHA. — But, sire, these times are past, we war not now;
the Jew is a good citizen.

K. STEPHEN. — Truly ye war not, for the world's your foe;
Nor did ye war, ye ruthless butchers, when blind luck
Favoured your devilish plots—ye murdered.

AARON. — Yea, sire; but we honour the king, pay taxes,
and increase the monies of the land.

K. STEPHEN. — Ye pay, good sooth, because no choice is left
ye;

No other means to grind our reckless barons.
Ye that ne'er sow, nor reap, nor spin;
Ye arid lands, whereon nor art nor science,

Learning or policy could e'er take root ;
Think ye the whole human race would hate ye thus,
Did not true instinct bid them shun such caitiffs ?
Could aught, save crime, have cursed your gold so deeply ,
That ye can no more hold it in your polluted grasp,
Than the impalpable air or subtle quicksilver ?

ELISHA AND AARON.—(*Both*) Oh, spare my life, sire ;
'twas this man's doings.

K. STEPHEN.—Let each man pay a hundred ducats to the poor and lie in prison for a year. Which of you is called Elisha ?

ELISHA.—I am the man, sire.

K. STEPHEN.—For thee another doom remains (*To the officer.*) Leave us and bear the other Jew to prison.

(*Exeunt officers and guards with Aaron.*)

K. STEPHEN.—Jew, what means this document ? Thou knowest 'tis forbid to alienate lands to one of thy house. Speak out or I will have thee broken on the wheel. Who was to sign this bond ?

ELISHA.—Forgive me, great king.

K. STEPHEN.—Jew, I make no pact with him that breaketh the law. Speak, ere it is too late.

ELISHA.—Count Ernest, sire.

K. STEPHEN.—Mind, if thou liest I will have thy tongue bored through with a red hot iron.

ELISHA.—Sire, I swear it.

K. STEPHEN.—When dost thou pay that which is yet unpaid ?

ELISHA.—To night, at sunset.

K. STEPHEN.—Now, listen ; thou shall't pay this money, and I will send with thee one as thy servant. Breathe not a word of who he is. Thou understandest me, for a Jew is not a fool ; your wives whelp no idiots. Be true and I may remit

somewhat of thy punishment (*Rings, enter a guard.*) Guard this Jew privily, sir, but harm him not. (*Exeunt guard with Jew.*) Now will I root up this treacherous work. Oh treason, have I ever said that he who cutteth thee down with the sword doth but carve one vile worm into twenty, to be undeceived at the last hour?

Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

A STREET IN GRAN. ENTER ERNEST, DRESSED LIKE A SOLDIER
AND MASKED, AND VAZUL, FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE.

VAZUL.—I must away and set the Lady Geraldine at ease. My royal uncle thinks he hath been a little too hasty, and that a year or two in one of his holy prisons will be enough to cure such a sharp young witch. But he is wrong; nothing but losing her beauty would touch her rocky heart. 'Twould be a hot fit of passion that could thaw a breast colder than the Eisberg at Christmas.

ERNEST.—(*Aside, Here is the spot; now to trap the prey. Vazul turns partly round, and Ernest deliberately runs up against him.*)

VAZUL.—(*Striking him.*) Thou rude clown, hast thou no better manners than to jostle a noble?

ERNEST.—(*Striking him again.*) Be thou whom thou mayest, I have manners enough to show thee how a soldier returns a noble's blow.

VAZUL.—(*Drawing.*) Thy spirit is above thy seeming station—draw.

ERNEST.—Not now, I pray you ; 'tis near the palace ; name another place and hour.

VAZUL.—And if I do thee such honour will thy heart not fail thee ?

ERNEST.—As little as thy own ; but I draw not here. Meet me half-an-hour hence at the foot of the crags, a quarter of a league below the ferry.

VAZUL.—Enough ; I will be there. If thou comest I will hold thee for a true man, and if not for a boor and foul braggart.

Exeunt separately.

SCENE VII.

A WALK BELOW GRAN, NEAR THE DANUBE. ENTER ERNEST,
STILL MASKED.

C. ERNEST.—The light waneth fast, and this brawler cometh not. Hath his courage failed at the pinch, or hath my star sunk ? I would he were come and gone, so that I were rid of this butchery.

(Enter Vazul in haste.)

(Aside, So fate hath drawn him into the net.) Sir, the light is well-nigh gone.

VAZUL.—'Twas not for fear of thee I stayed.

C. ERNEST.—Waste not your time with words, but draw.

VAZUL.—I know not if thou art a man, but thy manner is too strange and hasty to be mortal.

C. ERNEST.—Make an end to your prating, most noble knight. The sun is well-nigh behind the mountain.

(Three braves appear in the background, partly concealed by the trees.)

VAZUL.—Now heaven send me skill to rid the body corporate of soldiers of such a ruffian; this time triumph for victory will not be marred by regret at having shed blood. *(He draws, Ernest and the three braves rush upon him.)* Ha, treachery? *(Strikes down one of the braves, the others overpower him.)*

ERNEST.—*(To one of the braves.)* Quick, man; leave thy fellow there; the cold night wind will freeze up the current of life, and save him from too much bleeding.

VAZUL.—If thou wantest my life, why dost thou not take it?

ERNEST.—Nay, thou shall't live, Vazul; Gisela will but have thy eyes put out, and thy ears stopped with hot lead to hinder thee from hearing bad morality.

VAZUL.—Man, can'st thou play such a devil's part?

ERNEST.—Aye, I can, when the devil bids me.

VAZUL.—Then to thy last hour may Vazul's curse blight every hope of heaven.

ERNEST.—Well, I must choose another scene of action then *(To the two braves.)* Away with him, men. *(Exeunt.)*

(A noise of shouting heard outside. Enter two watchmen, with torches.)

FIRST WATCHMAN.—This way, I tell thee; hold thy torch lower; dost thou want to see the moon before she's out o' bed, or to stare at the owls?

SECOND WATCHMAN.—*(Holds his torch against the other's nose.)* There, I didn't mean to spoil thy handsome nose by looking at an owl.

FIRST WATCHMAN.—Mind if thou does that again I's sus-

ceptible to knock thy head again that tree, even if I's took up for damaging the woods.

SECOND WATCHMAN.—Well, come along; thou doesn't want to look at the bottom of the stream. 'Twas on this side I heard the clapping of swords; I'll wager 'twas a robber murdering honest Christians.

FIRST WATCHMAN.—Well, never mind, we've the law on our side, haven't us? Thou's going the wrong way; the sound couldn't come from the bottom of the river, or round a corner.

SECOND WATCHMAN.—And why not, when thou canst see round a corner with that crooked eye of thine? Come along.

FIRST WATCHMAN.—I tell thee I won't. Nobody but a ghost could fight on that side. The path's not wide enough for a goat to stand on, and as steep as a house roof.

SECOND WATCHMAN.—Well, but a ghost could'nt fight up to his armpits in water for fear o' melting. But go thy ways; I'll get the ten ducats for finding out murder (*Exit to R.*).

FIRST WATCHMAN.—Thou means for finding the murderer; but I'll put a hook in thy nose. (*Exit to L.*)

SECOND WATCHMAN.—(*To R. behind scenes.*) Help! rescue, good people. (*Enters, dripping wet.*)

FIRST WATCHMAN.—(*To L. behind scenes.*) Haste! save me; assistance, gentlemen. (*Enters, covered with mud.*)

SECOND WATCHMAN.—Oh, good lord, this is comfortable on a cold night; curse thee for a fool, why did'st thou not say the rain had washed the path away? But for the bushes that scratched half the skin off my back, I'd have been buried under water like a drowned fish.

FIRST WATCHMAN.—Heh! heh! why thou shakes as if thou had the ague, and had been trying a cold bath to cure it.

SECOND WATCHMAN.—Heh, heh, (*Imitating the other.*) Here give us thy torch, and don't stand snorting like a horse. (*First Watchman gives his torch, the other tries to light his at it and puts it out.*)

FIRST WATCHMAN.—Now, jolterhead, thou's done it. If there were only light enough, I'd knock the brains out of thy thick head. (*Runs up against a tree.*) There, I've broken my nose, thou clown.

SECOND WATCHMAN.—Softly, friend, or I'll bang thy hide 'till its as sore as a boil and as soft as butter. (*Strikes at him with the torch.*)

FIRST WATCHMAN.—A word and a blow, and the blow first. (*Strikes again. They rush wildly at each other, and both fall over the bravo.*)

BRAVO.—Oh!

BOTH.—Here's the murderer.

SECOND WATCHMAN.—Lift him up, and see if he's alive. (*Lifts him up by the hair of his head.*)

BRAVO.—Mercy, sir. (*The watchman lets him drop.*)

BOTH.—(*Scrambling to their feet.*) Murder! Thieves! (*They rush off.*)

BRAVO.—Murder, indeed, or worse. Did that infernal clatter mean that I have gone to glean the just meed of my ill deeds, or that I'm still alive to mend my life in this world? (*Enter an Officer of the Guard with two soldiers. The watchmen follow at a distance.*)

OFFICER.—Is't here ye left the man ye were afraid of?

(*The two watchmen wink, nod, and point to the bravo.*)

(*To the Soldiers*) Hold your torches down; these brawling idiots have seen a dead ass or heard a screech owl. But sure enough here is something in human shape. What ails thee, friend?

BRAVO.—That which thou can'st not cure. Take me to king Stephen, and I will tell him what he will quake to hear.

OFFICER.—Well he hears each man for himself, so thou shall't go before him in the morning (*To the soldiers*). Bear him away.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE OF ANDREAS AT BUDA. ENTER ANDREAS,
PRINCESS BERTHA RUSHES IN FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE.

P. BERTHA.—Oh Andreas, my child, my child is gone.

ANDREAS.—Geraldine gone?

P. BERTHA.—Aye, great chief, thy promised bride
Is torn from these arms to serve the Christians' god.

ANDREAS.—What meanest thou, princess, by these hot
words?

P. BERTHA.—That she who was to share thy bed
Sleeps now within a cell, if sleep do visit her;
Caged midst the herd of the fanatic luckless souls
Who people convents.——

ANDREAS.—Geraldine in a convent?

P. BERTHA.—Such is her lot, unless thou avail to save her,
There must she live, if that be life indeed.
Those beauteous hands must now do drudge's toil,
And her fair back feel the rude convent scourge;
While she, a daughter of the house of Simegh,
Must learn to wean her voice from joyous song,
To the frigid harmony of matin hymns.

Oh, Geraldine! my child! my child!

ANDREAS.—Hath Stephen dared to do this?

P. BERTHA.—And who else but the sainted Stephen would have dared?

ANDREAS.—Then, by heaven, will I have vengeance.

P. BERTHA.—Swear that, Andreas, by our ancient gods.

ANDREAS.—(*Raises his arm and strikes it with his dagger. Then holding the dagger up*)

I swear unto thee by the great god of the Sun ;
And by his subject elements ; the sacred fire ;
The solid earth, and ever shifting waters ;
The unseen winds that yet do see all things ;
To right thy wrong.

BERTHA.—Then hasten, for there's not an hour to lose.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A ROOM IN KING STEPHEN'S PALACE. KING STEPHEN
ASLEEP ON A COUCH.

(*Enter Ernest, Disguised as a Soldier.*)

C ERNEST.—That woman's taunts still drive me to this deed.
Before me lies the man who ever loved me
Like a brother, and I would slay him now
For a she-wolf's graces ; yet must I do it ;
For guiltier than I am I cannot be,
Or deeper misery taste. (*Drawing his dagger.*)
Now for as black a deed,
As ever crime did coin a reason for.

K. STEPHEN.—(*Softly in his sleep*) Vazul.

C. ERNEST.—Oh God ! that word hath struck me to the heart ;
For heavier than the huge Carpathians press on earth,
Doth Vazul's curse weigh on this unnerved arm ;
Nor could the deepest roar of the wild thunder,
Silence the groans of his soul's agony, when the bubbling
 lead

Hissed in his ears.

Lie there, accursed tempter. (*Throws down the dagger.*)

There's been enough of guilt ; 'tis ended now.

What ho, there, sire ; arouse thee, king ;

Treason is at thy side. (*Enter an Officer and two Guards.*)

K. STEPHEN.—Who art thou that speakest in so strange a
guise, and so lordly a tone ?

C. ERNEST.—(*Tearing off his disguise.*)

The vilest knight that ever monarch trusted,

Or soldier followed to the field of war.

Now lead me to the block.

K. STEPHEN.—Thou Ernest ! Who sent thee hither to this
guilty deed ?

ERNEST.—My guilty soul.

K. STEPHEN.—Not that alone ; thou was't not born a
plotter,

Though brave enough upon the battle field.

Go, I forgive thee ; thy own thoughts be thy doom.

C. ERNEST.—I am severed from this world, as tho' I lay
Already in the tomb.

As the last favour I shall ever ask,

I pray thee let the headsman do his work.

K. STEPHEN.—Nay, get thee from my sight ;

For memory of old times I will not harm thee.

As a boy I played, and wept, and quarrelled with thee ;

We went thro' childhood's valley hand in hand ;

Rode side by side to the hot battle-field ;

We sat like brothers at the council board and banquet ;
Even thy treason I forgave, and thou dost seek

To shorten the few hours of life that heaven hath left me.

C. ERNEST.—Break me on the wheel, Stephen, but spare
me thy words. Oh God ! (*Swoons.*)

(*King Stephen signs to them to bear Ernest away, and Exit.*)

SCENE III.

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE OF ANDREAS. ENTER BERTHA WITH A
LETTER IN HER HAND.

P. BERTHA.—Bad news indeed thou sendest ; the more need
then,

To rouse each slothful, doubting chief to duty,
And head the van of strife for life or death.

Enter Ernest.

My Ernest, what means this craven style of speech ?
Thou hast failed, but thou art not so young,
That thy good fortune never yet hath jilted thee.

C. ERNEST.—Speak not of fortune to a reckless man,
That hateth less his foes than his vile self.

Tell me, Bertha, how would'st thou serve a traitor ?

P. BERTHA.—Strike off his head, and leave his useless
carcase

To the wolves, for want of better grave diggers
To inter it.

C. ERNEST.—And yet hath Stephen spared this traitor's
head,

Took not a rood of land ; an ounce of gold ;
 But sent me forth unharmed ; me a traitor,
 Shunned by my peers ; a brand upon my house !

P. BERTHA.—Art thou turned monk, man, or hath duke
 Stephen

Shriven and confessed thee ? Out on thy sickly fears,
 Let us to horse, and die as the Magyar should.

C. ERNEST.—Say rather flee, while there is yet time ; Ester-
 hazy is on thy traces. Save thy life, for I seek not to preserve
 mine.

P. BERTHA.— Go,
 Hasten thee to a priory. Turn shaveling, Ernest ;
 Then can'st thou shrive the sick and tend the poor ;
 Pray, fast, and pine, like a true monk ;
 For thou art fitted now for little else.

C. ERNEST.—And that were better than do as I have done.

P. BERTHA.—Stay, I have still a happier thought.
 By the lone Balaton lake there is a hut,
 Where some time since a Christian maniac dwelt ;
 The peasants called him saint, wise men a knave ;
 Go thou and fill his place ; with sickening gaze,
 Watch the rude boors snaring the stupid fish :
 Or stretched upon thy wretched pallet, hear
 The hoarse bittern's cry boom o'er the reedy lake ;
 And think for such a lot a crown was lost.
 Go, for I would not chide thee further.

ERNEST.—Fare well (*Exit*).

BERTHA.—And is it thus we part ? Is it for this
 That I risked wealth and titles, ease and safety ?

Enter Count Esterhazy with Four Soldiers.

C. ESTERHAZY.—Princess, I do arrest thee for the crime
 of treason.

P. BERTHA.—Beware, count, I claim the noble's rights.

C. ESTERHAZY.—I mean no rudeness ; yield, lady, and you shall have such tending as beseems a noble ; the king seeks not your life, but that you shall remove as soon as may be to Gran, there to live a state prisoner till further measures be taken.

P. BERTHA.—And doth thy valiant master fear an unarmed woman in her last retreat ?

C. ESTERHAZY.—As little as he doth such missiles as you purchased for his poor son. Start not lady, all is known to us.

P. BERTHA.—(*Calmly*) 'Tis enough, Sir ; I beseech you leave me a few minutes ; I will not put your patience to the proof.

C. ESTERHAZY.—Madam, in all that is befitting your rank, I will not fail. (*Exit with soldiers.*)

P. BERTHA.—God of the Magyars leave thy throne awhile ;
 Arm thee 'gainst earth ; send loud-mouthed, riotous war,
 To scour the prisons of the mutinous damn'd,
 And fill his ghastly squadrons with those rebels,
 Of which e'en hell would purge itself.
 Thou staring famine in thy tattered robes ;
 Ye plagues, that steal by night like skulking thieves,
 To each doomed threshold ;
 Crowd on their heels and change the Christians' triumph
 To the loud wail of those who mourn for slaughtered
 men.

For me remains but this, (*Putting her hand upon her dagger.*)

The last, best antidote to earthly ills.

Come from thy hiding-place, thou trustiest friend, (*Drawing
 her dagger*)

Of those who quail beneath the victor's arm ;

One blow from thy keen point, and Bertha's race

Is closed, with this sad epilogue.

(*Stabs herself and falls dead.*)

SCENE IV.

THE GATEHOUSE IN THE ROYAL CASTLE AT GRAN. A WARDER
BEFORE THE PRISON DOOR. ENTER AN OFFICER.

OFFICER.—Thou hast two Jews here, warder ?

WARDER.—I have, sir, and would be better pleased not to have them.

OFFICER.—Why ?

WARDEN.—Because, sir, they are the dirtiest, sauciest, greediest pair of hounds that ever needed the whip. They have cheated every thief put into their kennel, and would skin a flea for his hide and tallow.

OFFICER.—Then their quarters will smell all the better when they are gone. The king's orders are to set them free ; so send them across the frontier, and they will do our old enemies more harm than all the wars they ever brewed.
(*Exit Officer.*)

WARDER.—If I could but clean out their money-bags, they might go to the devil their own way. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V.

PRIORY OF SAINT ADALBERT. THE PRIOR ON THE STEPS OF THE
PORTAL. ENTER ERNEST, ADVANCING SLOWLY TOWARDS HIM.

ERNEST.—Peace on this holy spot, if meek-eyed peace,
Like a tired dove can fold her angel wings,
And lay her down beneath the self-same roof,
That shelters from the world this guilty head.

PRIOR.—Whate'er thy crimes, rank, name or country,
Enter and fear not.

If wearied with vain triumphs and stale joys,
Tales of man's fraud and selfishness, or woman's frailty ;
Or if, mayhap,
Some hopeless woe hath chased thee from thy home,
Then moor thy shattered bark in this calm haven.

C. ERNEST.—Father, I was rich, powerful, and honoured ;
And now I come to thee a friendless man ;
One loaded with such crimes, that lands and titles
Are left to the first plunderer who may spoil them.
My vassals seek another heritage ;
The lean-winged bat, that loveth desolate haunts,
Hangs from the brave old roof-tree, beneath whose cope,
Great knights have feasted.
I am a felon whose attainted clay,
No chief shall follow to the trophied tomb.

PRIOR.—My son, forget such petty trifles for that banquet,
Where peer and peasant dine on equal terms.

C. ERNEST.—Aye, but how forget the hideous treason,
That made me forfeit these ?

PRIOR.—Let brother judge not brother ; few are they
That sink into the grave without a crime.
Doff then thy warrior's garb, and thy proud name ;
Give to the poor thy useless gold and lands ;
A meagre price for the rich heritage of peace.

C. ERNEST.—Peace, father ? I tell thee,
Vengeance hath set his slot-hounds on my track ;
And there is one with seared and blighted eye-balls,
That heads the chase. For peace I hope not ;
But lay that vision for the few sad hours
That now remain.

PRIOR.—(*Descends, takes him by the arm, and leads him up
the steps.*)

Nay, my son ; thy daily toil and prayer ;
The blessed quiet of our holy life,

Will bring thee peace, as surely as the toil of day,
Doth bring the dreamy stillness of the night.
Should e'en these fail, the hour must come at last,
When he who conquered in the race of life,
Lies down by him he vanquished in the strife. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI.

A STREET IN GRAN. ENTER COUNTS BATTHYANY AND
ESTERHAZY, MEETING.

C. BATTHYANY.—Good morrow, noble Esterhazy, what news of our royal master?

C. ESTERHAZY.—The worst that I could tell. The king fadeth faster with each waning moon.

C. BATTHYANY.—Alas! I feared as much. Hath he appointed his successor?

C. ESTERHAZY.—Aye, sir; Gisela's son is to follow him.

C. BATTHYANY.—And sow strife broadcast. What news of our late disturbers?

C. ESTERHAZY.—Andreas and Bela are fled, and Ernest hath died in the most horrible torments. The monks feared to go nigh his cell, and he raved out his last hours like a despairing fiend.

C. BATTHYANY.—And well did he merit his doom. But who is this in such haste? (*Enter an Officer.*)

OFFICER.—Sirs, I am pleased to have met you so soon. The king desireth your presence most urgently; he is much worse.

C. ESTERHAZY.—Sir, we will not keep you; tell the king we come instantly (*Exit Officer*). Batthyany, if nought detain thee let us go at once.

C. BATTHYANY.—Esterhazy, nought shall detain me. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VII.

KING STEPHEN'S PALACE AT GRAN. KING STEPHEN IN HIS CHAIR OF STATE; COUNTS ESTERHAZY AND BATTHYANY; THE PRIMATE OF HUNGARY, OFFICERS, GUARDS, &c.

K. STEPHEN.—Nay press me not, Batthyany; my last act shall be one of peace. Andreas and Bela, thou sayest, are fled.

C. BATTHYANY.—Yea, sire, guilt hath made them glad to trust their horses rather than their consciences.

K. STEPHEN.—So be it. My faithful friends I pray you,
See that the son of Gisela wear this crown,
As a true Magyar. To thee, prelate (*To the primate*),
I do commit the charge (*Giving him the crown*).

C. ESTERHAZY.—Sire, in the names of all my peers I vow,
To do thy bidding like a faithful subject.

K. STEPHEN.— Farewell to royal state;
And may that power, who is to our weak strength,
As the strong oak unto the humble flower
That nestles at its root, approve my choice.
Oh, Emeric! Vazul! I come to join you now.

PRIMATE.—Sire, your son bore to the grave the prayers and tears of every Christian. Be comforted, I pray you.

C. ESTERHAZY.—(He is going fast, brave Batthyany; his voice falters, and I see in his look that which foretells the approach of death.)

K. STEPHEN.—And thinkest thou the weak arm of worldly comfort,

Which scarce can dry the changeful infant's tears,
Avails to stem the full-grown stream of sorrow?
Old Esterhazy, let me cling to thee for a few moments,
Ere my soul float away before that breeze,
Which heaven doth send to winnow the pure spirit

From the frail chaff of earth.

There is a gloom in the air ; open the casement, sirs,
Let me look once more upon the noble Danube.

(They open the casement.)

Oh, Hungary ! thou home of chivalry and beauty,
May a king's blessing shield thee from all ills.

My son ! my Emeric ! my boy ! I come ! *(Dies.)*

C. ESTERHAZY.—'Tis ended now. Batthyany,
See that they bear him forthwith to his chamber ;
There let your precious burthen rest, till all due means
Are ta'en that it be given to earth's firm custody,
With fitting honours.————

C. BATTHYANY.—Aye, if there be men who can devise such
honours ;

For who, great king,
Shall fitly chronicle thy lofty deeds ?
Thy worth, thy wisdom, and thy piety ;
Thy generous heart, which not even Gisela's treachery,
Could rouse to vengeance ?
And ne'er since the first Magyars dwelt in tents,
'Midst Asia's wilds, hath such a chieftain ruled.
Weep, Hungary, for woe hath broke that noble heart,
And Stephen's friends must now from Stephen part ;
To meet no more till meet the good and brave,
In those bright lands that lie beyond the grave.

Curtain Falls.

THE END.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: March 2009

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